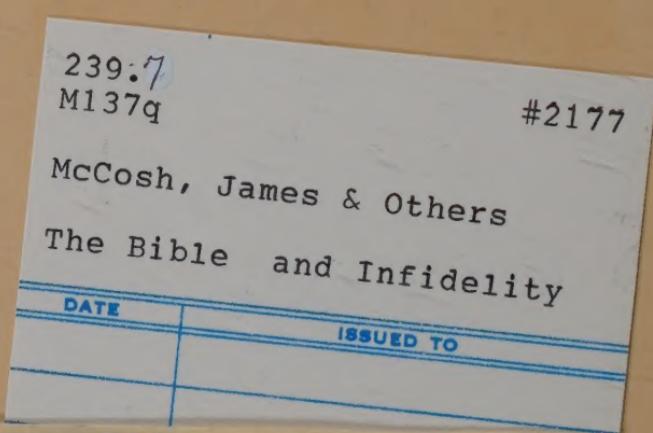


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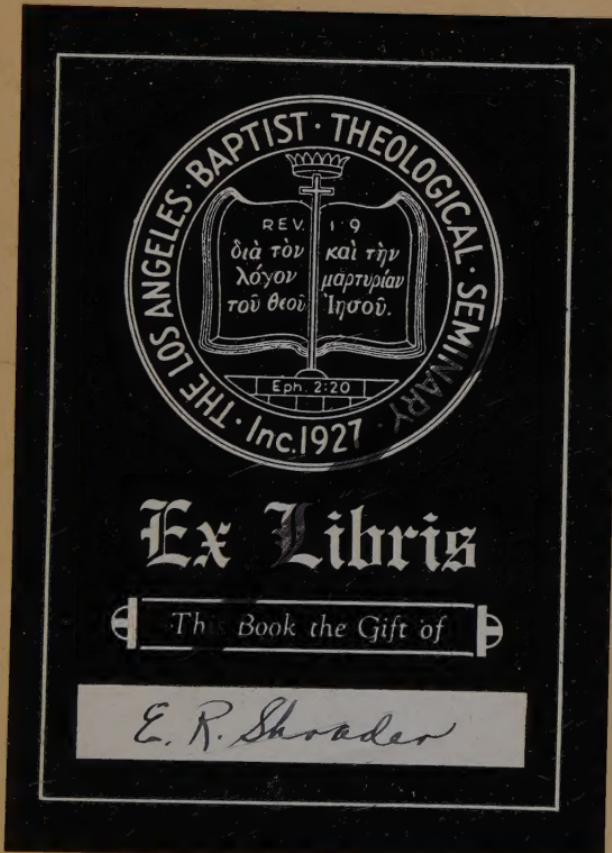
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QUESTIONS OF MODERN THOUGHT;

OR,

LECTURES ON

THE BIBLE AND INFIDELITY.

BY

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RENAN'S
LIFE OF JESUS.

BY

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THE

LIFE OF OUR LORD

A REALITY, AND NOT A ROMANCE; WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO RENAN'S LIFE OF JESUS.

THERE are two and only two ways in which an attack can be made on the reality of our Lord's life. It may be urged, first, that the gospel history is a fable in which it is vain to seek for any truth, or that it is such a mixture of fact and fable, that it is impossible to distinguish the one from the other. It is after this manner that Grote proceeds in dealing with the siege of Troy. He says, we have no account of the siege, except in books of poetry, which do not profess to be history, and which were composed ages after the alleged occurrence; and so we cannot be quite sure, that there ever was such an event, or on the supposition that there may have been a basis of fact, we cannot separate the actual from the traditional and legendary. There have been assailants who took this ground in seeking to undermine our confidence in the gospel history. It is now acknowledged, that the attempt was a complete and a miserable failure. Our Lord lived not in fabulous, but in historical times, in which Grecian culture and literature were widely diffused, and in which the Roman government had introduced settled law and means of communication. And these four Gospels are on the very face of them not poems, or legends, or myths, but his-

torical narratives professedly by eye-witnesses, or persons who received the information from eye-witnesses. In their structure and spirit they are simple and artless ; life-like and truth-like. Satisfactory evidence can be produced, that they existed very much as we now have them in the age immediately succeeding the crucifixion of Jesus ; three of them in less than forty, and the other in about sixty years from that event. If we maintain that the life of our Lord is not an historical event we are landed in hopeless difficulties ; in consistency we shall have to give up all ancient history, deny that there ever was such a person as Alexander of Macedon, or that there was such an event as the assassination of Julius Cæsar. M. Renan has seen this, and has followed another method. He allows that the four Gospels are, in substance, historical books, and that Jesus spoke and acted very much as he is represented as doing in these narratives ; but then he claims to take so much and rejects the rest. He has thus avoided some of the difficulties in which infidels have involved themselves, but he is caught in others quite as formidable. He has drawn out from these four Gospels a superficially connected and plausible biography, which he chooses to call a Fifth Gospel ; but in doing so he has violated all the laws of historical investigation, proceeded on caprice and prejudice, drawn a character inconsistent with itself, and given us a history utterly incongruous and incredible.

It is one of the disadvantages under which we labor, in contending with the skeptic, that he objects to every weapon which we may bring with us. It is fortunately possible, in the argument with this critic of our Lord's life, that we can fight him with his own weapons. M. Renan receives a large portion of the Gospel history, but he will not accept the whole. Now I meet him by showing, that he is acting capriciously in taking so large a part and rejecting the remainder, and that the same historical reasons which lead him to adopt so much, should, in consistency, constrain him to go farther and hold by the rest. Suppose some one were to affirm, that

Shakspeare had written all those plays which deal with war and stirring incident, but that he could not have conceived or depicted the reflective and moralizing Hamlet; or to maintain, that while Milton had composed the dignified and magnificent Paradise Lost, he had not written the livelier Comus or the duller Paradise Regained, which, it is alleged, must have been produced by an imitator of inferior genius—how would you meet such a preposterous hypothesis? You would prove that we have as good historical proof of the one work as of the other proceeding from the authors whose names they bear; and you might show farther, that the works themselves bore traces in style and manner, in thought and sentiment of proceeding from the same writers. It is in this way that I am to proceed in reviewing the French critic. I am to show, that when he has gone so far he cannot, in consistency, stop where he does, but must advance considerably farther.

I am to assume nothing which he does not allow in his candor, or in his ingenuity. What then does he admit? He allows that Matthew wrote a Gospel; that Matthew was an eye-witness and an ear-witness of what he records, or had very direct means of knowing the truth of it. He concedes all this on the internal credibility of the narrative and on the authority of Papias, who wrote early in the second century, and of a chain of succeeding writers who quote or refer to the Gospel. He is specially fond of insisting, that Matthew preserved the discourses of our Lord. “He deserves evidently a confidence without limit for ‘the discourses,’” Intro. p. xxxvii.; and in particular he grants, that the parables as being one narrative could not be altered, and that we have them as our Lord delivered them. He allows, farther, that there was a Gospel by Mark that Mark was a disciple and an eye-witness, and to be trusted as to the facts which he relates; that he was a relative of Peter, who may be supposed to have given his sanction to Mark’s Gospel; and that Peter was originally an illiterate fisherman, and the impulsive, impetuous, open and honest man which he is described as being in the

Gospels ; he admits that Matthew and Mark were not men of genius or invention ; that neither was capable of writing the discourses put into the mouth of our Lord, of imagining the wonders which He is represented as performing, or of conceiving the finer and loftier features of His character. He grants, farther, that these two Gospels must have been written about the time of the siege of Jerusalem, that is between thirty and forty years after our Lord's crucifixion.

So far all seems satisfactory to the Christian. But to enable our critic to dispense with any passages that displease him, he alleges, that the two Gospels underwent a change. He thinks that when a person happened to have either of the Gospels, in order to have a complete text, he would write on the margin passages from the other Gospel. It was in this way, he supposes, that the two Gospels were fashioned into the shape in which we now have them. The theory may seem an ingenious one, but it is a crazy fabric, which, as it tumbles down, only injures the man who built it. For by such a process, we should have had not two Gospels, but a hundred or a thousand. The disciple at Jerusalem, with a copy of Matthew, would make additions in one way ; and the Christian at Antioch, with a copy of Mark, would supplement in a different way ; while readers at Alexandria, at Ephesus, at Corinth and at Rome would amend in a third way, and thus we should have had innumerable variations and discrepancies ever multiplying and becoming more exaggerated ; whereas, it is admitted by all, we have from a very old date, certainly from the beginning of the second century—I believe earlier—these two Gospels in their present form, and soon after we have them fixed forever, by their being translated into other tongues.

M. Renan does not look with so favorable an eye on Luke's Gospel. He evidently does not like the account given in the first two chapters of our Lord's supernatural descent. But he makes important admissions as to this Gospel. It is allowed, that it was written

by Luke, and that Luke also wrote the Book of Acts; that Luke was a disciple of our Lord and had means of knowing about his sayings and acts; that as he claims he "had perfect understanding of all things from the first," and got information "from them that were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word;" that he was the companion of Paul and must have had the countenance of that Apostle to his Gospel. He will not allow that Luke published his Gospel before the destruction of Jerusalem, for this would imply that our Lord gave a most minute prediction of that event, (chapter xxi.); but he is sure it must have been given to the world soon after—that is, within forty years of our Lord's death. He qualifies all this by alleging that Luke admitted legends and adopted traditions. Here again our critic involves himself in perplexities from which there is no honest outlet. For in these forty years there was not time for the gathering of traditions or the formation of myths. We have unfounded traditions and legends of occurrences which happened centuries ago ; but not of the lives of John Quincy Adams Henry Clay and General Jackson. At the time when Luke wrote, a large body of eye-witnesses and actors in the scenes, Galilean and Jewish, such as apostles, disciples, priests, scribes and rulers, friendly and unfriendly, must have been alive, and many of them ready to expose any erroneous statement put forth by the friend of so well-known an Apostle as Paul. If it be alleged, that additions may have been made by others to this Gospel, we are involved in the same difficulties as we have shown Renan is, in regard to the first two Gospels, that is, instead of one settled Gospel we should have a hundred Gospels according to Luke, each differing from the others according to the kind of legends adopted.

M. Renan does not know very well what to make of John's Gospel. He is sure it must have been the same person that wrote the Gospel and that wrote the three Epistles that bear the name of John—the style is sufficient to prove this. He reckons it quite established by historical evidence, that this Gospel was published before the end of

the century—that is, less than seventy years after our Lord's ascension. He is certain that the author must have been John, or an immediate disciple of John, and thinks it highly probable, that it must have been written by John—in fact he thinks we may consider John as the author. He allows that John was an apostle, very intimate with our Lord and constantly with him, and that he wrote later than the other evangelists, and with the view of furnishing a connected chronological account of our Lord's life and of reporting discourses and detailing incidents which had not appeared in the other Gospels. He concedes, that this John was originally an illiterate fisherman, son of Zebedee, the fisherman on the lake of Galilee ; and that he could not have conceived or written certain of the discourses in the Gospel, such as that sublime prayer which Jesus is represented (chap. xvii.) as putting up in behalf of his disciples. But to counteract these concessions, he would have it that parts of chapter xxi. are an addition made by one who was nearly a contemporary. He insinuates that good faith was not always John's rule, in writing his Gospel, (p. 159). But observe into what a mess of difficulties our author has plunged himself by these admissions and denials. Chapter xxi. has all the peculiarities of style which have convinced Renan that the other parts of the Gospel and the Epistles are by the same writer. That writer opens his first Epistle : “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of Life, for the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness.” M. Renan is evidently right when he finds the same author saying in the same style, (John xix. 35) : “And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he sayeth true, that ye might believe.” But surely it must be the same who says in the rejected chapter xxi. 24 : “This is the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.” I believe the testimony thus solemnly given. To refuse this, is to make a liar and a hypocrite

of the beloved disciple of our Lord, the apostle who has recorded the most heavenly and loving of his discourses, and who, according to history, lived a long and consistent life, bearing persecution and exile because of his belief in what he had attested, and ever with the words of purity and truth upon his lips.

It is out of these four Gospels that the critic composes what he calls a Fifth Gospel. I have occupied myself many laborious hours in ascertaining how much of the four Gospels is acknowledged in the fifth. I have marked, by pencil, in a copy of the New Testament, the passages employed in the construction of the "Life of Jesus," and which are sanctioned by quotation or by reference at the foot of the page; and have thus made out the Gospel history acknowledged by this unbeliever. The portion of my Testament occupied by the Gospels is quite black with the strokes I have drawn. There is not a single chapter of the four Evangelists in which we have not less or more acknowledged. The author has accepted whole chapters as written by Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, or John, and as containing the real discourses of Jesus, or narrating the deeds performed by him. I find that there are about nine hundred and seventy-one verses in Matthew's Gospel, and Renan refers to no fewer than seven hundred and ninety-one of these as giving accurate account of the sayings or doings of our Lord, and he quotes other seventy-three as being in the gospel of Matthew, but not allowed by him to state the facts correctly. In Mark's gospel there are about six hundred and seventy-eight verses; and our author uses three hundred and eighty-four to draw up his own account of our Lord's life; and ascribes other eighty-two to Mark, who, however, in these does not please the critic. Of the eleven hundred and fifty-one verses in Luke, six hundred and six are employed for his own history by Renan, and one hundred and thirty-six more are attributed to Luke, without the statements being sanctioned. I have not summed up John's gospel so carefully, because he speaks

so indecisively about it ; but a like calculation would give us very much the same result.

And here it is of the utmost moment to have it settled what the critic admits to be true in our Lord's life. He allows that Jesus was the son of Mary, who was married to Joseph the carpenter ; that He had brothers and sisters, and was the oldest of the family ; that He was brought up at Nazareth ; that He went up to Jerusalem at the age of twelve and conversed with the Doctors ; that He could read, but did not know any foreign literature ; that He preached at Nazareth and was in danger of being thrown over the brow of a hill which Renan can point out, and was driven out of Nazareth ; that He had transactions in Cana, of Galilee, and went to Capernaum on the lake ; that he was much in the houses of Zebedee and Peter ; that He gathered round Him a body of disciples ; and that the twelve named in the Gospels were His Apostles ; that He visited in His labors of love the cities and villages lying round the north-west of the lake ; that He was believed to cure diseases and work miracles, and allowed the people to think that He did so ; that He delivered discourses from a ship on the lake and from a mountain in the neighborhood ; that these discourses and especially the Sermon on the Mount, and His parables have been handed down to us as He delivered them ; that He was a relative of John the Baptist and had intercourse with him and was much influenced by him, receiving messages from him and sending messages to him, and that John was a genuine, though a stern man ; that He took occasional excursions into other regions such as the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and to Cesarea Philippi and to Peræa and Jericho and Ephraim ; and that He went up regularly to Jerusalem at the religious feasts, and there delivered discourses and purified the temple, and was supposed to do wonderful works,—all this as is detailed in the four Gospels. In particular Renan gives a full account of our Lord's last visit to Jerusalem and of His death. He tells us that Jesus was intimate with Martha and Mary

and the family at Bethany, that He often spent the night there, that He brought Lazarus out of the tomb there, and that ointment was poured on His body there in anticipation of His burial ; that He went into Jerusalem during the day, and Renan can point out His favorite resorts and places of promenade ; that at the passover He ate the last Supper with the disciples ; that the priests and rulers plotted against Him and that Judas betrayed Him ; that He often went into the Garden of Gethsemane, and that the officers seized Him there ; that He was brought before Caiaphas the high-priest ; and that Annas who (it is acknowledged by Renan in striking consonance with the Gospel narrative) ruled the high-priest ; that His trial as reported by the Evangelists is in remarkable accordance both with the Roman law and with the Jewish customs as given in the Jewish Talmud ; that the disciples fled ; that Peter stood afar off and denied Him ; and that John and the women went to the foot of the cross ; that Pilate was unwilling to condemn Him and proposed to let Him go, but yielded to the clamor of the Jews who insisted that Barabbas should be released instead ; that He was scourged and buffeted and led to crucifixion through the streets of Jerusalem ; that being exhausted they laid His cross on a young man from the country ; that He was crucified between two thieves, and that after being some hours upon the cross there was a bursting of a vessel of the heart ; that His side was pierced and that a fluid substance came out of it ; that Joseph of Arimathea begged the body and was joined by Nicodemus in preparing it for the sepulchre ; that Pilate after exacting precautions from the centurion allowed this ; that He was buried in the tomb and a great stone rolled upon it, and a guard set to watch it. Here Renan closed his life, and promised to take up the resurrection in a future volume. It is a suitable close. The Fifth Gospel gives us a death but gives no resurrection. In the Christian Church as at the creation of the world the evening and the morning constitute the day ; in this new religion, which is to supercede the Christian, the night cometh but there is no morning.

We do wonder when all this is allowed that the other parts of the Gospel narrative should be denied. But Renan cannot admit that our Lord possessed supernatural power, and so he is obliged to devise a theory to account for our Lord's character, influence and alleged wonderful deeds without allowing Him to be a divine messenger or teacher. He finds three periods in our Lord's life. In the first period He sets out as a moralist and gentle reformer ; He begins to preach and gather around Him a company of disciples and to travel from village to village in Galilee. In the second period He comes into closer communion with the stern and gloomy Baptist ; He imagines Himself or allows Himself to be thought the Son of David, and the Messiah of the prophets ; and seeks to establish a kingdom of a romantic or ideal character in which civil government and private property were to cease, and in which the rich were to be degraded and the poor exalted. Failing in this, there comes a third period, in which He becomes disappointed and embittered, nay is tempted to use artifice, and is hurried on to death in a troubled manner and spirit, expecting some undefined world-revolution to come. This is the new theory of the life of Jesus stript of some of the paint with which the artist has daubed it. It is one of the most baseless historical theories ever formed by perverted ingenuity. In order to confute it I am to use no other materials than those which the author of it has sanctioned. The passages which I quote (except when notice is given) are all employed by the critic in constructing his theory and may, therefore, be legitimately employed in overturning it.

FIRST PERIOD. At this stage Jesus is placed before us in what is meant to be a very engaging light. There never was so lovely a person as He. Of a ravishing form, of a genial and loving spirit, He drew towards Him the hearts of all the men, but especially of all the women, with whom He came in contact. Somehow our author cannot tell us how the youth had risen to a high morality, far above that of degraded Galilee or bigoted Judea. He had

come to feel that God was His Father and the Father of all mankind. This was all His theology. He knew no more, but this idea penetrated and filled His soul. With no sense of individuality He could not distinguish Himself from God. In a happy hour (so our author expresses it) He begins to be a Reformer and the Preacher of a new morality. Drawn by His charming Person and the tenderness of His love a number of men and women gather round Him. Putting Himself at their head He rides about the country. "He thus traverses Galilee in the midst of a perpetual *fête*. He rode upon a mule, an animal in the East well adapted for riding, and sure-footed, and with a dark eye shadowed with long lashes and full of mildness. His disciples sometimes gave vent to their enthusiasm by attempting a sort of rustic triumph. Their garments took the place of drapery; they cast them upon the mule that bore Him; they spread them upon the ground where He had to tread. Wherever He dismounted His arrival was held to be a joy and a blessing to that house. He stayed chiefly in the villages and at the large farms where He met with an eager welcome." The picture is a very pretty one, and resembles the pilgrimages which I have seen in Austria of men and women to favorite shrines. Our author at this place gives a very enchanting picture of the scenery of Galilee, of its lakes and mountains, its trees and shrubs, its grass and lilies which he supposes the carpenter's Son and his attendant fishermen to admire in much the same way as the boy poets of this century, who have caught the spirit of Rousseau, Scott and Chateaubriand rave about natural scenery. Full of ideal dreams and pastoral visions our Lord is represented as delivering His Sermon on the Mount acknowledged to be perfect, and also the most beautiful and instructive of His parables.

This is Renan's picture of the First Period. As to some points in this description it is clear that they are pure romance. It is instructive to find that no Evangelist, no early Christian says a word

about the beauty of Christ's Person. I rather think that Renan draws here from the Roman Catholic painters. As to His riding on a mule we read of His once riding into Jerusalem on an ass as a symbol of His being a King, but a lowly King; but at all other times He walked it on weary foot over burning plain and rugged mountain. As to His admiration of natural scenery, it is obvious that He did love and appreciate His Father's workmanship, that grass and these lilies and the fowls of the air. But it was with a far loftier feeling than the Frenchman gives Him credit for; and there is no reason to believe, that Peter and Andrew, Philip and Thomas did ever break forth into ecstacies about flowers, like boarding-school girls of the nineteenth century, or were anything more than plain, earnest fishermen, striving to earn an honest livelihood on their lake, and seeking withal to know what is true about God and right in duty. And then that sermon, acknowledged to be so perfect, that none but Jesus could have uttered it, how did it come that a Galilean peasant could utter it? Whence that morality pure it is acknowledged, beyond all displayed to us before or since? I believe that he who expounded it must have been taught of God.

That morality is not only pure and ethereal, as Renan allows; it is profound, penetrating and soul-searching, in a way which our clever critic cannot estimate. It is certainly very different from the light, airy sentiment which is painted and recommended in our modern romances, French and British. It is different in its whole spirit from the narrow, self-righteous ceremonial of the Pharisees, who busied themselves with laying down regulations as to the tything of mint, anise and cummin, and as to the washing of pots and vessels. It is equally removed by its spirit of love and self-sacrifice above that of the proud old pagan philosophers of Greece or Rome, or that of the modern, self-sufficient rationalist. It presupposes that man is a sinner; it sets before him a high idea of purity and love, and points out a way of reaching it by grace, and

recommends the graces of faith in God, repentance, humility and charity.

It can be farther shown that while He was from the beginning a moralist, He was from the first more than a moralist. It was not in the progress of events that the idea occurred to Him of setting up a kingdom. He intended all along to do so. It was not as He met with keen opposition at Jerusalem that he contemplated persecution. He foresaw it from the commencement of His public ministry. All this can be established by passages sanctioned by Renan, as belonging to the earliest part of our Lord's ministry.

In proving this, I will not insist on the intimation of Jesus contemplating a great work at the age of twelve, "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke ii. 49), for the critic, while he quotes the passage, is not sure about our Lord's younger years. Neither will I dwell on His being consecrated to His work by baptism, as our author is not very willing to give his adhesion to all that is said about John baptizing Jesus, for he sees it implies the supernatural, the heavens opened, the dove descending, and the Father approving. But I ask what meaneth the temptation which preceded our Lord's preaching and ministry? Recorded by the first three evangelists, reported by Mark, who is said to be so accurate as to facts, Renan acknowledges that there must be reality in it. And mark that it comes in not at the close of His ministry, when His spirit was supposed to be chafed by opposition; but at the commencement, showing that there was a cloud already over His spirit and denoting that thunders would speedily burst. Then let us listen to our Lord's first sermon. It is not of that light, romantic character which we might expect from Renan's theory. The subject of it is given, Matt. iv. 17: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; in which two great truths are brought out: one that there was a kingdom at hand, and the other that men were to enter it by repentance. The account is fuller in Mark i. 14-15: "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of

God, and saying the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel"—where it should be marked, that our Lord connects the kingdom He was to set up, with the predictions of the prophets, the fulfilment of which is said to be at hand ; that the coming kingdom is twice mentioned ; that the gospel is said to be about that kingdom : and that repentance is the proper preparation for it.

Let us turn now to the Sermon on the Mount, so much lauded. The first beatitude is one suited to sinners, (Matt. v. 3) : "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The second implies, that men are sinners, verse 4 : "Blessed are they that mourn." There is a distinct apprehension of persecution coming, and an admonition to prepare for it, verses 11-12 : "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." A kingdom is everywhere kept before our view, and the disciples were taught to pray, "Thy kingdom come." Those who use the Lord's prayer are assumed to be sinners, to be weak and liable to temptation and exposed to the assaults of the Evil One, vi. 12 : "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The difficulties of the Christian course are clearly announced, vii. 14 : "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." I quote these utterances (and others to the same effect might be added) because it is acknowledged, that they were delivered in the First Period, when it is supposed that He was so light and hopeful and His whole prospect gladdened with sunshine. It should be frankly admitted, that Jesus developed His plans gradually, as they had been ordained in the counsels of heaven and according as men were able to bear them. But He had in Him all along what He afterwards became, just as the tree is in the seed, as the oak is in the acorn. His course was one from first to last, along one road

to one goal, beginning with His baptism and temptation and ending with His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension.

SECOND PERIOD. In this period Jesus comes into closer connexion with John, is seized with a revolutionary ardor, and purposes to set up a Kingdom. Though not descended from David, He allows it to be thought that He is. He never goes so far as to make himself equal with God, but He identifies Himself with God, and reckons Himself the Messiah. The Kingdom which He contemplates is not to be a political Kingdom, established by a rebellion against the Roman government. It is an ideal, that is a visionary one, with no magistrate and no private property, and is to appear immediately. In order to bring it in, He ordains apostles and sends them out to preach and proclaim the new reign. Meanwhile He allows His ardent followers and the superstitious multitude to imagine that He heals diseases by a miraculous power, which He did not possess. Such was His aim and His work during the middle portion of His ministry, in which, according to our author, we have His enthusiasm kindled into a nobler flame, and His contemplated ends enlarged; but in which, also, we have the commencement of defections from the pure morality of His early career, and of that accommodation to circumstances which led to positive artifice in the Third Period. If Jesus had died before this stage of His existence, He would not have been heard of beyond a small district of Galilee, or after His own age; but He would have been purer and more faultless.

It is easy from the materials which the critic allows to scatter this vision. We have seen from the very first that our Lord meant to set up a kingdom. As His public ministry advances the plan is developed more fully, but it is in the end merely the filling up of what had been described in outline from the beginning. The kingdom is obviously a spiritual one. But there was never a purpose to set aside the temporal power. He refused to interfere in matters of civil government saying, when He was called to decide in a legal

dispute, Luke xii. 14, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" He wrought a miracle in order to pay tribute, and laid down the important principle Matt. xxii. 21, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Here we have a clear and admirable enunciation of His doctrine, both as to the kingdoms of this world and His own kingdom, subsisting together and alongside, each having a place and a sphere, namely, that in temporal things tribute, honor and obeisance are to be rendered to Cæsar, the civil governor, while in spiritual things the heart, conscience and worship are to be reserved for God. Our Lord clearly announces that His kingdom is to be a spiritual one. And here I will not insist on John iii. 3, where he says we must be born again in order to enter the kingdom, for Renan is not sure about this passage, though it is consonant with the whole teaching of our Lord. The critic acknowledges that Matthew may be implicitly trusted as to our Lord's discourses. Let us turn then to Matt. xiii. where we have a full account by Jesus of the nature of His kingdom. We see how the kingdom is to be established, and men brought into it v. 3, by the scattering of the seed of the Word; and we should observe how it is declared that a large body of mankind are not prepared to receive that seed because their hearts are impenetrable as the beaten wayside, or thin as gravelly places, or choked up as with thorns. Again this kingdom is to be the result of a long process, and of growth, and is to be so far a mixed kingdom, for v. 24, it is likened to a man sowing good seed while the enemy sows tares, and both grow together to the harvest. In v. 47, it is represented as a net which gathers all kinds of fishes, which shows that our Lord saw that in the visible Church the evil was to come in with the good, and that His views and expectations were never of that ideal utopian character which Renan supposes them to have been. The same lesson is taught by the comparison of the kingdom, v. 31, to a grain of mustard seed and v. 33, to leaven. Fortunately our author acknowledges the parables to be

genuine; the disciples had not genius to fashion them, and they are too consistent to be made up of legends. The whole of Luke xv. is sanctioned by our skeptic, and we see from it who were to be members of Christ's kingdom: v. 5, the lost sheep brought back on the shoulders of the Shepherd, v. 8, the lost piece of money saved from the dust, v. 11 the lost son brought back by the remembrance of a father's love to the father's house. The kingdom was to be a reign of God in men's hearts, Luke xvii. 21, "Neither shall they say lo here or lo there, for behold the kingdom of God is within you." The whole object of our Lord's mission is described Luke xix. 10: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Renan quotes twice Matt. xviii. 3, where the necessity of a spiritual change is clearly pointed out. "Verily I say unto you except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

THIRD PERIOD. We approach the view given of this period with aversion; it so grates upon our feelings. We would shrink from the examination of it if we could, but there is no help for it; the charges have been brought and we must face them. Jesus has been filled with an idea which makes Him dizzy (p. 318). The idea He finds is not to be realized; and so bitterness and reproach affect His heart more and more every day (p. 324), and he gives way to feelings of disappointment and sourness, and in the end He hurries on to His death as a sacrifice which He cannot avoid. In order to set up His kingdom He must leave Galilee and go up to Jerusalem. But there the scenery is so sterile and horrid in Judea compared with the smiling northern province that His spirits become oppressed! The Jewish doctors cannot appreciate His fine morality or His lofty visions, and the people are too indifferent to take any notice of Him. He must do something to make Himself known. What is this to be? He must either renounce His mission, or become a worker of miracles (p. 257), and here we have excuses offered for the conduct of Jesus which grate upon our moral sense,

and to which we indignantly refuse to listen. Jesus has now to use less pure means (p. 92); and has to yield to opinion and satisfy the ideas of the time (pp. 160-360); at first the *artifice* (oh we shrink from the word as applied to Jesus) is so innocent (p. 162); He allows Himself to be thought a worker of miracles against His will (p. 268). There lives on the back of the Mount of Olives, where it begins to slope from the summit, a reputable and loving family, the members of which have become attached to Jesus. They are anxious to further His views and promote His cause. We shrink from the thought of giving the account which follows, as we would from repeating a scandal against a brother or sister, a father or mother. But the calumny has been uttered, and we must repel it. Martha and Mary devise a plan of putting their brother Lazarus, while yet living, into the tomb, and Jesus consents to come to the grave and call him forth. When we read this we feel that we must reject with scorn all the compliments which Renan has been paying to our Lord throughout the volume, when he lauds Him as so great and pure, as "the individual who has approached nearest the Divine," and as "the Creator of the eternal religion of morality."

But let us pursue the development of the romance which has now become so unnatural. The miracle does call the attention of many, but it only irritates the Jewish rulers, and they conspire to put Jesus to death. He has seen for a considerable time that he cannot establish His kingdom. He becomes bitter in His expressions and fierce in His denunciations. He feels that He must prepare for leaving the world. He might have avoided death, but love carries Him on (p. 370), and he makes the sacrifice expecting some speedy renovation of the world to be brought about He knows not how.

Need I enter upon any elaborate statement to show how false the picture, if there be any consistency in character, any reality in the Gospel narratives. It can be established in the first place, that our Lord did not begin to work miracles at this time; that He habitual-

ly performed them from the commencement of His public ministry ; we have as good evidence of this as of any other incident in His history ; as we have of his reputed miracle of Bethany. The same John tells us, Chap. ii. that He began His miracles three years before at Cana of Galilee ; and Matthew gives detailed accounts of many miraculous cures, such as of the centurion's servant, viii. 5-12, and of the man with the palsy, ix. 2-6. Mark, so commended for his accuracy of his narrative of facts, tells us iii. 15, that when he ordained the Twelve, He gave them power to "heal sicknesses."

And as to Jesus being engaged in the alleged transaction at Bethany, our better nature sensitively recoils from it. It is a curious circumstance that in the edition of his work prepared for the people, the author has left out the occurrence. He has here felt himself in difficulties. If he entirely omit the incident, his whole version of our Lord's life loses its credibility, for we have an account of the transaction, minute, circumstantial, and consistent, by John, a professed spectator. And our author in his book to the educated gives the event, and as he cannot admit it to be miraculous he makes it a deception. But in making it an artifice he has made it an inconsistency and improbability, indeed a moral impossibility, seen to be so by every man of sense, and sure to be so viewed by the common people who may not be in a position to judge of abstruse historical questions, but take a shrewd and sound view of human character ; and so the incident is withdrawn from the view of the multitude. But Renan's version of it is before us, and we have to examine it. If Jesus was what the author describes Him, the purest, loftiest and most truthful of men, He could not have done the deed. If He did the deed, He could not have had that lofty consciousness and those high moral aims which He is represented as setting continually before Him. The critic is here in a dilemma, and we leave him exposed on the horn he may prefer, to the scorn of all truth-seeking historical investigators. The cunning artist has here outwitted himself, and has been led to do so

by his false theory. He makes one represented by him as entitled to be called "divine," act as if he were a vulgar juggler or a wandering professor of mesmerism. If such an incongruity were exhibited on the stage it would be hissed off it; as it is we must hiss it off the stage of history. That one who it is acknowledged did such deeds of holiness, endured such self-sacrificing sufferings, and delivered such lofty discourses should have descended to so low a deception is monstrous, is utterly incredible. I would as soon believe that there was not a single honorable merchant or trustworthy tradesman in our country, or a single honest man or virtuous woman in our world. I would as soon believe that my father never cared for me, that my mother never loved me, as that one so truthful and sincere and loving should have done so hypocritical an act.

It could be shown that in this third period He is unfolding as pure a morality as in the first. Matthew, who reports the discourses so faithfully, represents Him as at this time summing up the law in love, in love to God and love to man, Chap. xxii. 37 to 40. It is clear that He is developing the plan of His work, which had been all along, before His mind.

He is still contemplating the establishment of a kingdom and the very same kingdom. This is brought out in the parable reported by Matthew xxv. 14-30, in which the Master distributes talents among His servants, and departs with the assurance that He will return. The new kingdom is to be established in consequence of the death of the Son (Matt. xxi. 33, Mark xii. 1-12). He had been announcing His death for a considerable time, Mark ix. 31: "For He taught His disciples and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed He shall rise the third day." He brings out clearly that it is through His death that life is to be imparted to the Church. John xii. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but

if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." The death is an atonement for sin, for when He takes the cup He says Matt. xxvi. 28, "For this is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." He gives instructions as to the discipline, communion and prayer to be instituted and kept up in the Church when He departed. Matt. xviii. 20: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is clear that it is the same kingdom which has to be entered by repentance and regeneration that is to be continued by worship and holy fellowship.

It may be allowed that Jesus becomes more faithful in His warnings, first to the Galileans and then to the Jews at Jerusalem, as He draws near the close of His pilgrimage. But there is no trace of bitterness or disappointment. The darkness no doubt is becoming denser, but the eclipse had begun at the commencement of His atoning work. We see it in the temptation immediately following the baptism. And He continues as loving, as tender, as full of sympathy as He ever was. Nay have we not all felt as if the prospect of His death and of His parting with His disciples imparted an additional pathos to these heart utterances of our Lord? That sun looks larger, and glows upon us with a greater splendor as he sets. The plant sends forth a greater richness of odor by being crushed. The fragrance is poured forth in richer effusion from the alabaster box when it is broken. Certain it is that some of the tenderest incidents in our Lord's life occur towards its close. It was at the period when He is supposed to have been soured, it was when He had left Galilee for the last time, and was setting His face steadfastly towards Jerusalem, that He rebuked the disciples when they were calling down fire from heaven. Luke ix. 55. It was at this time that He took little children in His arms when the disciples would have driven them away, saying of such is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. xix. 14.

It was in one of his last visits to Jerusalem that He looked so com-

placently upon the poor widow casting her mite into the treasury. Mark xii. 42. It was as He hung upon the cross that turning to Mary He said, "Woman, behold thy son," and turning to John He said, "behold thy mother." I know that our critic has cast doubts on this incident, but very fruitlessly. A great living historian has argued that certain letters must be genuine, for on the supposition that they are fictitious they must have been written by a Shakspeare. The argument is not altogether conclusive, for they might have been written by one with a genius like that of our great poet. Now we here argue in the same way, but our argument is conclusive: for none but the highest poet could have conceived such an incident, and the evangelists, however highly elevated in spirituality, had not the skill of our unmatched dramatist. The same may be said of the comfortable assurances given by our Lord to the thief on the cross, "To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise," and of His dying prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This petition and the confiding expressions "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," were the fitting close of a life devoted to the redemption of man and the manifestation of the divine glory.

UNITY OF THE B I B L E.

BY

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PASTOR TABERNACLE CHURCH, NEW YORK.

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THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE.

BY JOSEPH P. THOMPSON, D.D. LL.D.

THE BIBLE holds a position at once independent and unique in the history and the literature of the world. It cannot be classed with books of Science, though its descriptions of nature excited the admiration of Humboldt,* by their fidelity and comprehensiveness, and its schedule or ground-plan of the creation is verified more and more by modern astronomy and geology.†

It cannot be classed with Historical works,—though Bunsen after all his toil upon the monuments and traditions of Egypt, with a view to determine her “place in Universal History,” has aptly said that “History was born in that night when Moses, with the Law of God, moral and spiritual, in his heart, led the people of Israel out of Egypt;”‡ and Ewald says of the “Book of *Origins*,” which he regards as in part the foundation of the Pentateuch, that “this is the first work known to us that seeks to arrange infinitesimal details of origin in one comprehensive genealogy;” and he speaks also of the stress which the Hebrew Scriptures “laid upon the Divine element in history, without in the least marring its human truthfulness”—of their “grandeur of material, and their simple

* *Cosmos*, vol. 2, pp. 68, 69. † *Dana, Manual of Geology*; chapter on *Cosmogony*.

‡ *Egypt's Place*, vol. I. p. 23.

force of representation," as a peculiarity by which "Hebrew historiography stands so alone in antiquity, and serves for us too as a perpetual model."*

The Bible does not properly belong to the department of Mental Philosophy, though as Lord Bacon has said, "God makes use of our Reason in His illuminations, inoculating, as it were, His revelations into the notions and comprehensions of our Reason;" and therefore, we ought in every way to exercise reason in matters of religion, "provided the mind be enlarged, according to its capacity, to the greatness of the mysteries, and not the mysteries contracted to the narrowness of the mind."†

And yet again, the Bible is not strictly a treatise upon Ethics or Theology. Though it assumes a knowledge of moral distinctions, and of the being, the attributes, and the government of God, derivable from the light of nature; and though it adds to this, in the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and the Sermon on the Mount in the New, the highest conceptions of moral truth and duty; and though in the Psalms and Prophecies of the Old Testament, and in the discourses of Christ and the writings of the Apostles in the New, it presents views of God, of the soul, of moral character and of the future life, which no other book contains, and which in their spirituality and sublimity must forever mark this as a Book apart from and above all works of speculation or imagination upon such themes—yet the Bible does not present these, its peculiar and distinguishing topics, in the form of articles of faith or of theses in Ethics or Theology. We would not think of classing it with Butler's Analogy, or with the writings of Augustine, Leighton, Calvin. There is no one alcove of a classified library in which this Book would find its special and appropriate place.

Historical,—containing perhaps the earliest authentic records of the human race, the history of the Jewish nation for 1500 years,

* History of Israel, pp. 55 and 81, Martineau's edition. † Sec. XXVII. Of Inspired Theology.

the biography of Jesus of Nazareth, and the narrative of the planting and spread of Christianity—yet the Bible is not a History.

Poetical,—with a sublimity and beauty of objective description, and a depth and pathos of subjective feeling, in the Psalms, the book of Job, the prophecies of Isaiah and John, unsurpassed in any poetry of ancient or modern times; and with an adaptation to universal human nature that neither Homer, Dante, Shakspeare, nor Göethe, can approach—yet the Bible is not itself a Poem.

Legislative,—as embodying the best code of antiquity in the statutes of a particular nation, and a moral law that rules the wide empire of earth and time—yet the Bible is not a book of Jurisprudence.

Philosophical,—as addressing to reason the profoundest problems in the nature of being and the government of the moral universe, tasking the highest intellects with the argument of Paul and the inner-sense of John—yet the Bible is not a book of Logic or of Philosophy.

Nor can we even class it with other sacred books—the *Vedas* of the Hindus, the *Zendavesta* of the Persians, the *Koran* of the Moslem; for we cannot regard the Bible simply as the sacred book of the Hebrews, or the text book of Christian doctrine and worship, or the manual of personal faith and devotion. It has its place in history and in humanity: it is not merely of the past, but for the present and the future also: not for a race, but for the world, not for an age but for all time. It is a book of universal truths for universal man. And by reason of its doctrines concerning God and man, and its union of the divine with the human for the perfecting of mankind, it stands forever apart as THE Book.

This Book, which cannot be classified with any other, but which viewed merely as a literary production, exhibits so many forms of composition, has yet a unity of its own, which marks an inherent spiritual life. The BIBLE which we are accustomed to see and handle as one book, bound together within the same covers, or at

most divided into two parts, the Old Testament and the New, in reality consists of sixty-six distinct productions, the works of about forty different authors. The composition of these many books extended through a period of 1600 years, from the time of Moses, more than 1500 years before Christ, to the death of the apostle John, near the close of the first century of our era. More strictly speaking, there was an interval of about 400 years between the close of the Old Testament writings and the beginning of the New; so that the composition of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament stretches over a period of 1100 years, from Moses to Malachi. Sometimes in this period there were long intervals between one prophet and another. Thus, after the five books of Moses and the book of Job—the oldest books of the Canon,—though the historical records of the Jewish nation, and especially their religious annals, were carried regularly forward, there were no new books of piety and devotion until the time of David, an interval of more than 400 years. At a later period, after two or three centuries, several of the prophets were nearly contemporary.

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament were all composed in the course of sixty years after the crucifixion, and all the eight writers of those books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, Jude, were contemporaries and had personal knowledge one of another. Yet they did not compose by concert with a view to making one joint production as the standard Christian book; but each wrote his Gospel or his Epistles in his own time and way, and for an object directly before him. Hence the books of the New Testament are not arranged in the form of a series of essays or treatises designed to supplement each other, but each fulfills some specific purpose of the writer, while they all contribute to the same general end. This fact points to the conviction of some common superintendence over the writers.

The thirty-nine distinct books by perhaps thirty different authors, that make up the Old Testament, were not prepared as an Encyclo-

pedia is prepared, by allotting to each writer particular subjects and then classifying the several productions in one work; nor were they written consecutively, each writer in turn taking up the work where his predecessor had left it; nor were these books the production of a certain school whose disciples from time to time expounded or defended its opinions; but these books bound together as one, were the independent compositions of men living many years, and in some cases, many centuries apart. Judge then of the probability that forty distinct authors, in sixty-six separate works, written at intervals during 1600 years, would agree in their conception and statement of some of the highest themes of thought that can be suggested to the human mind. Can the history of science or of philosophy furnish a parallel? We shall come back to this point presently; I now wish simply to fix the fact that *the Bible is made up of many books, by many men*, who wrote apart from one another, and often at wide intervals of time.

Again, the books that make up the Bible were written *in different countries, under various forms and conditions of national life and of civilization, and in different languages*. The books of the Pentateuch were written probably in the Desert of Sinai, though under the manifest influence of Egyptian culture; the book of Job has the air of the archaic life of the eastern desert; the historical books of the Old Testament, the Psalms and Proverbs, and several of the Prophecies were written in Palestine; the Prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, and the story of Esther, the Jewish queen, were written in the land of the Chaldeans during the captivity; the Gospels and some of the Epistles were written in Palestine; but most of the Epistles were written away from Judea and its associations, in Asia Minor, in Greece and in Italy. Hence, though the writers concerned in the production of the Bible were of one race, it is difficult to conceive of circumstances and associations more diversified and even opposite than those in which they severally wrote; now, under the shadow of the monuments of Egypt, and

trained in the learning and art of her early civilization ; now in the wild freedom and grandeur of the desert and amid the simple manners of wandering tribes ; now at the capital of the Babylonian empire in the height of its luxury and splendor ; now in the comparative seclusion of Judea, among an agricultural people of plain habits and tastes and of no literary ambition ; or at the religious capital in presence of the glory of the temple and its ritual ; or again in time of war when Judea was invaded and the temple laid waste, or the stranger and Gentile ruled in the land ; and yet again, from such seats of pagan wealth, commerce, art, luxury, idolatry and dominion, as Corinth, Ephesus and Rome ; thus amid the widest contrasts of place, society, government and religion, and in contact with all the leading forms of civilization and of empire for sixteen centuries, these forty writers, themselves of one narrow and often despised race, produced the books that compose our Bible.* What were the chances that they would agree in their own views of truth, and especially in setting forth the highest spiritual truth, untinged by the social, literary and religious influences around them ?

They wrote in different tongues ; the Old Testament writers in Hebrew, except that Daniel and Ezra, and to some extent Zechariah, show the influence of the Chaldee upon their style ; the New Testament writers in Greek, except that the gospel of Matthew may have been first written in Aramean,—the Chaldee dialect which the Jews brought back from the captivity—then the common language of Palestine, and probably the vernacular of our Lord Himself. And these books collectively make up the main body of the literature of the Hebrews, who were not a literary people. In other nations of antiquity we trace the rise, the progress, and the decay

* It was not within the province of this lecture to argue the genuineness of the several books of the Bible. For proofs on this point the reader is referred to works on the Canon, and to Bleek, Hengstenberg, Alford and others, in their "Introductions" to the Bible, in whole or in part. The writer here assumes what appears upon the very surface of the several Books, and is confirmed by the internal evidence of the Books themselves.

of a national literature, from rude beginnings up to a higher culture, then back into a fragmentary decline. But here Moses is as sublime as John, Isaiah is as weighty as Paul, and all the books are marked by the same moral characteristics, which distinguish them from other writings of antiquity. How shall we account for this, if there was not a divine superintendence over them all?

In estimating these books of the Bible from the point of unity, we must take into account also *the great variety of social position and of intellectual culture among their writers.* Moses and Paul were in the proper sense men of education. Moses, from his position at court as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, had access to the schools of learning which then placed the Egyptian priesthood at the head of the science of the world. The tradition is sanctioned by Stephen that he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."* Paul was trained in the chief school of Judea, under the famous Gamaliel, and his native Tarsus was a seat of Grecian culture,† with which his letters and speeches prove him to have been familiar. Luke also was an educated physician,‡ and his style gives evidence of his training. Daniel and Nehemiah§ held official posts at the pagan court of Babylon, then the leading empire of the world; and Solomon was himself a king whose wealth and power excited the wonder of surrounding nations.

On the other hand, David was a shepherd boy,|| and afterward a warrior, with no leisure for literary culture, though he created a Psalter for all ages and people. Amos was a herdsman, and was keeping his flocks in Tekoa when called to become a prophet.¶ Most of the writers of the Old Testament are unknown to us except by name; and the writers of the New Testament, with the exception of Paul and Luke, were men of no education, men taken directly from the humbler walks of life and made the apostles of a new religion for mankind.

* Acts vii. 22.

† Acts xxii. 8.

‡ Col. iv. 14.

§ Dan. v. 29; Neh. i. 11.

|| I Sam. xvi. 11.

¶ Amos i. 1; and vii. 14, 15.

What, then, are the probabilities that forty writers differing thus widely in their antecedents and their surroundings,—men taken from the court and from the sheepfold, from the school and from the fishing smack,—would agree in their presentation of moral and spiritual truths which had tasked the most philosophical and the best disciplined minds?—that without concert these would form a school of thought more comprehensive, more harmonious, and more permanent than any school of Greece?

And, to complete the survey, we must keep in view *the diversity of style and plan* in the composition of the sixty-six books that make up our Bible. We have books of *history*; the history of mankind at large from the creation until the dispersion into different nations after the flood; a history brief and fragmentary, and chiefly religious, but perhaps the oldest document in the world. After this comes the history of the Jewish people, with references to surrounding nations with whom they were brought in contact by the fortunes of war. These histories are interspersed with brief biographical sketches of patriarchs, prophets and kings.

We have also *lyrical poems* of the highest order, and *didactic compositions*, such as the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; there are *idyls* too, such as the book of Ruth and the Song of Solomon; and the book of Job has a *dramatic* cast. The Prophecies are partly poetic visions, partly historical pictures, and partly moral discourses. The New Testament is made up of the four Gospels, which give us in fragments the life of Christ, of the history of the planting of Christianity, with a biography of Paul, of numerous letters discussing points of Christian doctrine and practice, and of the grand prophetic poem—the Revelation by John. Now what is the probability by any ordinary rules of literary composition, that such a variety of books, poetical, historical, ethical, philosophical, narrative, epistolary; written by so many authors, of such diversified position and attainments; written in so many different places and at intervals so distant—is there *any* probability what-

ever, that these works would be found to agree in their presentation of certain truths, the most sublime and the most momentous that can be entertained by the mind of man ?

Now let us look at certain characteristic features of these several Books which stamp them with a unity of origin and of plan, beyond the possibility of chance or the probability of human contrivance.

I. *They agree throughout in their representation of the nature and the character of God, and this the highest conception of the Supreme Being that the human mind has ever formed.* Everywhere in the Bible, God appears as a *Spirit* having life in Himself, and the Author of life to all creatures. His power, His wisdom, His presence, His knowledge, in a word all the attributes of His Being are infinite and eternal. The account of the creation and the Ten Commandments in the books of Moses present God as an Infinite and Almighty Spirit, as distinctly as does Paul in his speech at Athens. Isaiah's vision of the divine majesty and glory is as spiritual and sublime as the visions of John eight hundred years later. When Jesus said "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," this was the same view of the divine nature that David a thousand years before had uttered in the 139th Psalm; "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? Thou understandest my thoughts afar off."

The *Oneness* of God in His Being is taught, or rather is assumed and recognized, equally by all the writers of the Bible, in all their books. Under whatever aspect God is presented, whether His unity is insisted upon in opposition to the many gods of the heathen, or He Himself is revealed by the three names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, He is always one and the same—the only living and true God. Moses worships Him, saying, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art

God;”* and John in the Revelation, adores the Lord God Almighty, “which was, and is, and is to come.”†

The *Holiness* of God is uniformly presented by the writers of the Bible as His crowning excellence,—the sum of His moral attributes, the very essence and glory of His character. He is “the Holy One of Israel ;” “the Holy One who inhabiteth eternity ;” He is worshiped in heaven by angels, by cherubim and seraphim, as “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.” His house must be holy, His ministers must be holy, His people must be holy, all that would pertain to Him or receive His favor, must be or become holy, for He is holy.

Now this view of the Divine character, which is uniform in the Scriptures, is also peculiar to the Bible. It is not borrowed from other books or from other religions.

Some philosophers of Greece and Rome—notably Socrates, Plato, Cicero and Epictetus—approached the conception of one spiritual God, infinite in His nature and perfect in His attributes. Yet their best thoughts concerning God were crude and vague, and they themselves were in doubt of their own speculations. For the most part even the religious treatises of antiquity contain very mixed and imperfect notions of the divine Being and His attributes, while beyond the pale of the Hebrew nation, Polytheism was universal in practice. In all the literature of antiquity the books that compose the Bible are the only writings that sharply and unequivocally teach that there is but ONE God, a pure Spirit, whose nature is infinite, whose attributes are perfect. And when we examine into the character of the gods of the old world, even among the most cultivated nations, Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Rome, we find monstrosities of the imagination, one-sided virtues marred by imperfections, deformities, frailties, passions, and even by positive and other outrageous vices. If the gods should appear on Chestnut street in the

* Psalm xc. 2. † Rev. i. 4 and iv. 8.

garb and with the manners of Olympus, you would send them to Moyamensing, unless the "Black Crook" has accustomed you to their style. Nowhere did the ancient mythology approach to the idea of a God of perfect holiness, or to absolute holiness of character as essential to a right conception of the Supreme Being. Its gods were either distorted images of human qualities, or photographs of human characters, with virtues and defects intensely and even coarsely magnified.

With such imperfect and unworthy views of God continually before them in the literature and the religions of all mankind, how came it to pass, that these forty men of an obscure race, shepherds, husbandmen, fishermen, or if scholars, then acquainted with the theology of Egypt, of Greece and of Rome; men, some of whom were captives under idolatrous nations, and others officials in courts where idol worship was conducted with state magnificence; how came it to pass, that these men writing at such "divers times," centuries apart, and in such "divers manners," have given to the world a conception of God in His spirituality, His unity, His infinity, and, above all, in His holiness, which no other minds had ever attained to, and which is confessedly the highest possible conception of the Supreme Being?

We can account for this intellectual and moral phenomenon,—without a parallel in literature—if we believe that God spake through these writers; that He was revealed unto them so that they discerned His character, realized His presence, were moved by His Spirit. But can we account for their doctrine of God in any other way?

I am far from claiming, that Monotheism was an original discovery of the Hebrew mind. Indeed the study of comparative Mythology points to Monotheism, under some crude conception, as the primitive Religion,—with perhaps the Sun as its earliest symbol, from which radiated at length the manifold forms of a symbol-worship that degenerated into the grossness of idolatry. But the pecu-

liarity of the Monotheism of the Bible is the singleness and pureness of its conception of God as a Spirit, with the powers and attributes of Spirit in their infinity ;—the Jehovah, the I AM ; the Eternal, the Unchanging, the Almighty ; the Creator of all things, the universal Lord ;—the tenacity with which it adheres to *Personality*, while other systems beginning in Monotheism run to Pantheism or to the personification of Nature ; the *personal relations* into which the Bible brings the divine Spirit with the human spirit, through His moral government, His holy laws, His paternal love ; and, above all, the peculiarity of the Biblical presentation of God is expressed in the one word *Holiness*, which, as applied to Jehovah, has no synonym.

The impression of this Biblical idea of God is strengthened, if we keep in mind that the sacred writers do not enter into argument concerning the being and character of God ; do not write on behalf of a system of theology, with its theses and definitions to be maintained by proof ; do not reason like metaphysicians upon the nature of the Divine Being ; but give forth their sublime conception of God as an intuition of their souls, as if they saw and felt that which they speak. They assert or declare the spirituality and the holiness of God as first truths, with which they are already familiar. And the impression is still further heightened by the fact, that this Biblical idea of God takes hold upon the universal mind of man with a reality and a power that no other theology can gain. What Socrates, Plato, Cicero thought concerning God, what the sacred books of the Egyptians, the Chinese and the Hindoos teach on this subject, is a matter of curiosity, and is of use in the comparison of opinions ; yet none of these views seize upon the minds and hearts of mankind at large with the conviction that this belief is a necessity to their own spiritual life. But the Bible takes hold upon the human mind in all ages, among all nations, in all conditions, with the same conviction that its God is a reality, and that this one, infinite, almighty, eternal, holy Spirit is the God with

whom we have to do. This peculiarity of the Biblical presentation of God is admirably stated by Isaac Taylor, in his analysis of the 139th Psalm. "The element of the Infinite finds a coalescent surface—a point of adhesion in the individual consciousness; a consciousness towards God which removes all other beings from our view, and which leaves us, each for himself, alone with his Creator and Judge. God is everywhere present, in the vastness of the upper heavens, in the remotest recesses of Sheol, everywhere, to the utmost borders of the material universe; but these affirmations of a universal truth are advanced in apposition to a truth which is more affecting, or which is of more intimate concernment to the devout spirit; this spirit, its faults, its terrors, its aspirations; and this animal frame, of which it is the tenant, is in the hand of God, and is dependent upon His bounty, and is cared for in whatever relates to its precarious welfare: and thus is so great a theme, the Divine Omniscience, brought home to its due culmination in an outburst of religious feeling: How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with Thee."* Whence came an idea of God so living, so real, so universal in its applications, so commanding in its power? Is not the book that contains it,—a book into whose whole texture is woven this supernatural idea of God,—is not this book a Revelation of God to the soul of man?

Equally marked and characteristic is the teaching of this book with respect to the *government* of God. In other ancient books of philosophy and religion we find vague and uncertain speculations touching a Providence and the care of the gods for men. Some leave the world to fate; some represent a favoritism among the deities toward persons or classes; some govern the world by fixed laws; some make it the arena of conflicts between rival divinities; some see nothing but chance and human will. But in the Bible we find

* *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, chap. i.

the grand conception of the personal government of God co-extensive with the creation ; all things are upheld by the word of His power; all creatures are fed by His bounty ; His tender mercies are over all His works.

Here, too, we find far more pronounced than in any other religious system of antiquity, the doctrine of *a moral government* of God over individuals, over nations, over the entire race ; a government by moral law, with sanctions of good and evil in this life, and with rewards and punishments in the hereafter ; a government in which God is personally active, and to whose ends the whole course of Providence is subservient. Whence came this unique and sublime idea of the Moral Ruler and Judge of the world, a representation that illustrates the whole history of the past, that takes hold upon each individual conscience, that gives ground for penal sanctions under human laws, and hope of the final triumph of justice and righteousness in the world ? How came this idea of the government of God to be found in this book alone, unless God Himself revealed it ?

The Bible, which is so striking and peculiar in its views of God, is none the less so in its view of *Man*. Though it describes man as degraded morally and socially by sin, it does not degrade him as to his origin, does not develop him from the ape. On the one hand it represents man as the offspring and the image of God, and thus links his origin with the divinity ; on the other hand it represents him as fallen and debased through the sinful abuse of his noble and immortal powers ; but, at the same time, it shows him capable of restoration, and provides the means of his recovery. This view of man, which is the key to his whole history, and which is responded to by every conscience, is a peculiarity of the Scriptures which points for its origin to Him who knows what is in man, who searcheth the reins and trieth the hearts.

And again, in the *standard of character* which it sets up before us, and in the rule of life which it lays upon us, the Bible exhibits a

unity of purpose as well as a purity and sublimity of conception unparalleled in the ethics of the world. Man's whole nature, spiritual, ethical, social, and the whole range of his relations to God, to the family, to his neighbor, to society, are comprehended in the Ten Commandments; and every motive of action, in every sphere, is analyzed and defined in the Sermon on the Mount. This searching analysis, this rigid test, this severe requirement, this lofty ideal, may well inspire awe in a mind conscious of its own imperfections: but at the same time it awakens hope, because the character which the Bible requires of men commends itself to their moral approbation, and brings the highest incentives to its own attainment. While a socialistic philosophy seeks to entertain us with the promise of "the Coming Man"—alas, ever a vague and distant vision—the Bible sets before us the *New Man* in Christ, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."*

I have reserved until now the most convincing, as well as the most inspiring unity of the Bible, in the Hope it ever holds up to Humanity through the Redemption of the race. The treatment of this theme, especially by Paul and John, blends the deepest philosophy of Religion with the loftiest poetry of Devotion; it exhibits the unity of thought in the Bible; the unity of plan in the Religion which the Bible reveals; the unity of purpose in divine Providence, unfolding and fulfilling this plan; the unity of development in history as this great purpose of Redemption moves onward through the ages; and the unity of end in the final accord of the physical and moral universe through the triumph of Good over Evil, of Salvation over Sin. The recovery of Man was announced on the day of his apostacy; though by the very terms of that announcement, this recovery would involve a long conflict between the seed of the woman and the serpent. But the method of that recovery was a mystery, obscurely hinted at by prophets who knew not what the Spirit that was in

* Eph. iv. 24.

them did testify: more and more pronounced through symbols and the later prophecies; at length unveiled in the incarnation of Christ; but still a mystery of the divine love, for the ever-unfolding glories of Eternity. In all this the spiritual is in close analogy with the natural as unfolding and interpreting the mind of God.

Progressive development, unveiling more and more some hidden unity of plan, carrying out rudimental ideas through various changes of structure and condition toward a completed system, is the latest doctrine of science concerning physical nature, organized being, and human society. Though in some quarters this doctrine is carried to an extreme not warranted by fact, and the unscientific attempt has been made to reduce the phenomena of consciousness, the spontaneous and the reflective movements of the intellect, and the executive and moral acts of the will, to the control of physical causes;—yet Progress through changes, and Unity through variety, and System through details, is written upon the whole face of nature and the whole course of history.

Prof. Agassiz, versed in so many branches of natural history, gives it as the sum of all his studies in Nature, that in classifying creation under the order and arrangement of modern sciences, we have not *invented* a system of thought for Nature, but have simply translated into human language the thoughts of the Creator, which were expressed in the primitive relations of animal life, and there embodied for our study: that we are not introducing order into chaos by the mode in which we classify and arrange our knowledge; but in our attempts to expound Nature, we are only the unconscious interpreters of Divine thoughts: that the science is not in ourselves, but in Nature, or rather in “the *plan* whose foundations were laid in the dawn of creation, and the development of which we are laboriously studying;—the great divisions under which we arrange the animal kingdom, being but headings to the chapters of the great book which we are reading.”* And having reduced his principles

* *Essay on Classification, Chap. I., Sec. 1.*

of classification to thirty distinct specifications of *thought* exhibited in Nature, he adds: "The combination in time and space of all these thoughtful conceptions exhibits not only thought,—it shows also premeditation, power, wisdom, greatness, prescience, omniscience, providence. In one word, all these facts, in their natural connection, proclaim aloud the One God, whom man may know, adore, and love ; and Natural History must, in good time, become the analysis of the thoughts of the Creator of the Universe, as manifested in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, as well as in the inorganic world."*

Now just as the discovery of this original plan in the creation, to which Science leads us back through long and gradual steps of its unfolding, points to a higher unity of thought and will—the conception and action of a supreme Intelligence,—and shows the mind of God in the book of Nature ; so does that prophetic plan of the new creation which we trace as the primitive and formative conception of the Scriptures through every period of their development, show the mind of God in this Book revealing His purpose of Redemption as men were able to receive it, until the whole sublime mystery was unveiled by the incarnation of Christ : ever the same purpose, the same promise, the same plan,—the lines of prophecy, of ritual, and of history converging more and more, until "in the dispensation of the fulness of times,"†—the *plenary* dispensation, the dispensation characterized by fulness—all things were summed up together in Christ, as all parts and functions of the body are gathered up in and under the Head.

Here the analogy of the animal kingdom holds both in the normal and in the exceptional methods of development. The Vertebrate type "which began during the Palæozoic era in the prone or horizontal fish," passed into "the locomotive series" through the reptile, the bird, the ennobled mammal, and received

* *Essay on Classification*, Chap. I., Sec. 32.

† Eph. i. 10.

its crown in "the *cephalic*" development in man—the fore-limbs being made to subserve the purpose of the head. In this long process eras are sometimes marked by the extinction of living species, and the appearing of new species under the comprehensive type. This answers to the miracle, which comes in at distant intervals to mark some higher phase in the grand prophetic type, until the whole is *cephalized* (the very word of Paul)—summed up under Christ as the Head.

If we run back a little along these lines, we shall see how this unity of plan in the sphere of spiritual life, like the unity in the sphere of animal life, reflects the mind of God, and stamps the Scriptures as the utterance of His thought and will concerning man. The evidence of the Plan itself, the grandeur of its conception, the brightening glory of its unveiling, and the comprehensive blessings of its consummation—these all witness that we have here no "cunningly devised fable," but "holy men of God spake as moved by the Holy Ghost."*

First we find in the Bible a unity of *promise* concerning the Redemption of man. It was a striking and almost an exceptional feature in Christ as a Teacher, that He did not profess to introduce a new and original system of truth,—as is so much the manner of great teachers in science and philosophy, and of the founders of religious beliefs,—but came to complete a foregoing Revelation and to finish an appointed work. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" †—or rather to *fill out*—to expand in their true spirit, and carry on to completion. He confirmed his own doctrine by appealing to Moses and the prophets: "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of Me: Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. If ye believe not his writing, how shall ye believe My words."‡ Again in giving his

* 2 Pet. i. 16, 21.

† Matt. v. 17.

‡ John v. 39, 40.

own summary of the law of love he said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* His disciples recognized this connection between Jesus and the ancient Scriptures: as when Philip said to Nathanael, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write;"† and the woman of Samaria said to Jesus, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ;"‡ and the constant argument of the apostles in their early preaching was that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled, in His person, all the conditions of ancient prophecy and promise.

Going back now upon this line of promise, to the later prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, we find in Malachi and Zechariah, the announcement of the coming Purifier, the Deliverer, the Shepherd, the King, the Redeemer, with various marks of identity, all which were verified in Christ.

Going back a century earlier, to Daniel, then afar off at the court of Babylon, we find predictions of the Messiah as a Redeemer, with specifications touching His character and work which were marvellously filled out in Christ.

Yet again two centuries farther back, in the prophet Isaiah, we find the most detailed delineation of the Messiah to come as the Child of Hope, as the Comforter of His people, as the suffering Redeemer, as the Prince of Peace.

Once more; in the height of the kingdom of Israel, when David had brought the tribes to be united at home and respected abroad, we find in his prophetic Psalms the announcement of a Son before whom he bowed as his Lord, of whom he predicted an everlasting kingdom and victory over death.

Then following back the course of ages to Moses, to Jacob, to Abraham, and across the flood up to the very gate of Eden, we find fewer and dimmer, but still legible and unmistakable,—like ancient inscriptions on the rocks of Sinai, like footprints to be traced in

* John i. 45.

† John iv. 25.

‡ Matt. xxii. 40.

the beds of sandstone—the promises of the great Prophet and Law-giver like unto Moses, of the Shiloh, the Prince of Peace who shall gather the peoples to Himself, of the Seed of Abraham in whom all nations shall be blessed, of the Seed of the woman which shall bruise the serpent's head.

When we consider the vast intervals of time by which these prophecies are separated one from another, as by the stepping-stones of centuries, the great variety of circumstances, places and conditions in which they were uttered ; in the infancy of the race, and at the moment when sin and death seemed to have destroyed all hope for mankind ; in the homeless wanderings of solitary men like Abraham and Jacob, who had nothing to build upon but faith ; in the wild encampment of a horde of fugitives just escaped from serfdom into the desert ; from the throne of a consolidated kingdom, renowned in arms, favored in foreign alliance, and glorious with the tokens of Jehovah's presence ; amid the dismembered fragments of that same kingdom, and in the exile of the people of God, who sitting by the rivers of Babylon, for very grief could not sing the songs of Zion to their mocking captors ; under a foreign rule, and in times of religious decline and social corruption that seemed to render hopeless the idea of reviving and deliverance ; when we thus follow through so many and so distant steps, so many and so contrary conditions, these fragmentary prophecies, and find them ever adhering to one type and following one line of development, and pointing to one perfect and glorious consummation, there is nothing in all that science has discovered of the permanence of types, and the unity of plan, and the development of system in the natural world, that can exceed in impression this proof, from the unity of the promise of Redemption, of the finger of God inditing and unfolding the whole.

This impression is deepened when we follow back the line of ritual and symbol. How fully did Christ instruct His disciples, and how continually did the apostles insist, that His sufferings and

death were a fulfillment of the sacrificial and ritualistic system of the Old Testament. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."* "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me."† At His first public appearance, Jesus was pointed out as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world;"‡ and he among the apostles who was best versed in the laws and customs of the Hebrews argued, that since "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us," and as High Priest had passed into the heavens, there was no more need of oblation or priesthood.

Now through the whole Bible history of the Jews we find from the date of their organization as a Nation, a system of sacrifices, framed first as a compensation or atonement for certain civil and ceremonial offences, and next as expressing the need of a propitiation in approaching to God. The system was cumbersome and meaningless except in this latter view. But going back of the Levitical ritual instituted in the wilderness, to Noah as the Priest of a new world, and back again beyond the flood to Abel, we find a custom of sacrifice for which no mere natural instinct or reason can fully account. In the system of Moses we know this was expressly enjoined by God; and the prophets, while they denounced any neglect or abuse of sacrifice as a crime, also insisted that the sacrifice was worthless unless its spiritual significance was kept in view by the offerer. Here then we have the same principle of unity and of development in the language of symbol and ritual as in the verbal promise: the primitive rudimental conception of sacrifice by way of atonement for sin; this conception unfolded in a great number and variety of sacrifices, in which, however, the central figure was ever the Lamb slain, and the central thought the redemption of sin; and all these emblems and types meeting in Christ by His

* John iii. 14.

† Luke xxiv. 46.

‡ John i. 29.

own interpretation of His death and the exposition of it by the apostles as the consummation of this system, which then vanished away as but the prophetic shadow, the outline sketch of the True—when the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world was offered once for all to take away sin. And so the death of Christ verifies, interprets and transfigures that mysterious system which had else remained without a key. The unity that runs through the *religion* of the Bible in its treatment of sin and reconciliation, a treatment foreign to all rationalistic conceptions of man's approach to God, argues the divine impress upon the original conception, the law of its unfolding, the dread mystery and glory of its consummation through the Cross.

There remains yet another line in this unfolding of Redemption, which weaves this argument into a three-fold cord which cannot be broken ;—the Biblical *history*, whose unity is the development of the kingdom of God in the world. The public appearing of Christ was heralded by John the Baptist as the ushering in of “the kingdom of God :” Jesus began His ministry by preaching “the Gospel of the kingdom of God ;” He announced to His hearers the glad tidings that the kingdom of God was nigh to them, was among them, and might be within them. Disdaining all the kingdoms of the world as the bribe of Satan, refusing the popular cry that would have proclaimed Him king of the Jews, checking the enthusiasm of His disciples when they would have fought or died for a royal Messiah, He nevertheless declared Himself a king, the anointed Son of God, challenged the allegiance of men to Himself as Lord, and asserted the sure and perpetual triumph of His kingdom.

Running back through the Old Testament Scriptures, we find this conception of a righteous and glorious kingdom to be set up in the latter days held forth continually both as the hope of Israel, and as the consummation of God's purposes of grace for mankind.

We go back to that primitive scene of the patriarch of the

twelve tribes, dying in a strange land, his sons gathered around him as he braces himself upon the edge of his couch, and leans upon the top of his staff and worships the God before whom his fathers “Abraham and Isaac did walk,” and as his dimmed eyes brighten with the vision of the future, we hear him say, with the confidence of a Seer to whom that vision is reality,—“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh—the Peace shall come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the People be.” * Hardly is David seated upon his throne in Judah, and the ark that had rested in Shiloh brought up to Zion, when as if to disclaim the fulfilment of Jacob’s prediction in himself, the Psalmist prophesied anew the coming of the Lord’s anointed, who should have “the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” †

But though Judah in the time of her prosperity must still wait for the consummation of her kingdom, yet in her times of depression and fear the promise is renewed to revive her hope. Isaiah then lifts up his voice like a trumpet, rallying the discomfited and despairing people: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.” ‡ And Zechariah, making the hills of Palestine vocal with the welcome to Messiah sings, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh unto Thee;” § and Micah reaches forth the prophetic benediction to Bethlehem—“Though least among the thousands of Judah, yet out of her shall

* Gen. xlix. 10.

† Psalm ii.

‡ Isaiah ix. 6, 7.

§ Zech. ix. 9.

He come forth that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." *

And all the history of the ages is brought to crystallize about this single thread of the promised kingdom of the Messiah. It is wonderful with what tenacity of assertion the Bible holds to this conception of the kingdom of God ; it is amazing with what majesty of purpose, what stateliness of march the Providence of God moves ever toward the consummation of that kingdom in the coming of Christ. Men, kings, peoples, dynasties, empires, as brought within the contemplation of this Book, are nothing, save as they touch upon this kingdom, and are the agents or opponents of its progress. Egypt, Arabia, and Tyre, Assyria, Babylon and Persia, the later Macedonian and Roman empires—all are of no account save as they help or hinder the unfolding of the kingdom of God. The covenant with Abraham *posited* that kingdom in the oath of Jehovah as the guarantee of its universality and its perpetuity ; the constitution of Israel under a Theocracy erected before the world a symbol of this divine kingdom, and provided within itself the means of its spiritual development : and when the fullness of time had arrived for the spiritual to burst its shell and stand forth in the beauty of Righteousness, the majesty of Truth, the power of Love, then the polity like the ritual fell away, and symbol, prophecy, and history met and were fulfilled in Christ.

From a wider range of view I might describe the preparation in human society, in governments, religions, philosophies, laws, for the entering in of Christianity as a fresh infusion of life and power from above into a dissolving civilization—a decaying, despairing world ; and following down the course of human affairs, might also show to what extent Christianity has moulded modern society, and been the central force in the history of human progress : Christ the unity of Humanity past and to come. But the subject limits me to

* Micah v. 2.

the internal evidences of such unity found within the Bible itself. And when we consider the sublimity of redemption as a scheme of thought, the mysterious pathos and power of the symbols by which it was shadowed forth, the vastness of the kingdom in which it was embodied as its consummation, we have in these ideas picked up along the track of ages in the line of this book—and found nowhere else—a unity of promise, of ritual, and of history, unfolding a unity of plan, that no growth of a national literature, no process of national development, no philosophy of history can account for. Such mighty conceptions could have originated only in the mind that encircles all worlds, foresees all ages, directs all events—and the progressive unity of redemption through all the lines of Prophecy, Ritual and History in the Bible, is the unveiling there of the mind of God. The phenomenon of this book has no parallel except in the book of creation written by the same hand: and how does the *moral* transcend the material!

Oh for the tongue of Dante to sing, as from the highest circle of Paradise he beheld the magnificent vision of all the events of Time consummated in the Redemption, and sang

“Behold the hosts
Of Christ’s triumphal march, and all the fruit
Harvested by the rolling of these spheres.
There are the wisdom and the Omnipotence
That oped the thoroughfares ’twixt heaven and earth
For which there erst had been so long a yearning.”

Oh for the vision of Kepler to discern in the movements of the planets the timing of Christ’s advent, and see all the heavenly bodies marshalled to do homage at His throne.

Oh for the fire of Handel to kindle prophecy and story, and even suffering into song: and set all things in earth and heaven aglow with the music of Messiah’s triumph, from the symphony of shepherds to the chorus of the redeemed.

But neither Dante nor Kepler nor Handel, nor all that poetry,

science, and music might render to such a theme, could once approach this magnificent epic of Paul, which represents all things celestial and terrestrial, physical and moral, visible and invisible, from the first inception of the creation to its final consummation, as ordered for and centered in Christ. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. . . . in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace: having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth: even in Him: according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” *

Viewing now, the Bible as a whole, we find it marked by a tone or style above the common range of human thought and feeling. When we compare the style and thought of particular books with the known intellectual advantages of their authors, when we remember that David was a shepherd, and John a fisherman, we feel that something more than native genius or poetic inspiration was needed to produce such compositions from such minds. And through the whole book there is a tone of spiritual elevation, a style of thought, feeling, and expression, concerning God, the soul,

* Eph. i.

the invisible world, the future state, that is always sustained by these writers and is not equalled or approached by any others.

We find all the books that compose the Bible *pervaded by one spirit and object, clearly divine*; it is, that by precept, by example, by a reconciliation provided and a guidance promised, they may restore man to the likeness of God, and make him a partaker of the divine blessedness by making him a partaker of the divine holiness. Men of great genius sometimes write so obscurely that both the moral and the meaning of their works are hidden from the majority of readers. Not to speak of Jean Paul Richter, who is an enigma to German scholars, who will decide what Tennyson meant to accomplish by his poem of Maud, or Robert Browning by his Sordello; or whether Kant believed in a personal God or in a pantheistic soul; or whether Swedenborg believed that anything was real, or actual, or literal, outside or inside of his own brain. How often do we lay aside the writings of a man of reputed genius with the despairing question, What *is* he driving at? But one can never have a doubt of what the Bible is aiming at. There is no book so real as this, a book of realities grand, glorious, palpable, terrible. Its God is a real, living God. Its law is a reality. Its spiritual world is a reality. Its threatenings against evil-doers are realities; its promises and hopes are realities; its salvation is a reality; its life and death, its resurrection and judgment, its heaven and hell are realities. And these realities have an object; they are not like the drapery of Milton's Paradise Lost, or of Dante's Inferno. The Bible aims throughout to make men better. Perfection of character is its aim; and the revelation of God in His holiness and His mercy, in His law and His redemption is its means.

As when you see wheels, shafts, pins, bands lying apart, each finished in itself, yet each adapted to others, you know that some machine is contemplated by the founder, though you may not see how to put it together; but when you see the machine put together and in action, you perceive new fitness in every part and the grand

combination of all for one end ; so in the several books of the Bible, you discover an adaptation to the same end, but in the completed volume you behold the grand harmony of all the books in one object—the restoration of a sinful race to its Paradise in God ! The mind that conceived such a plan, and slowly unfolding it, part by part, through the ages, brought it together finished in this book, must be divine. The Bible is a sublime symphony framed about the theme of man's reconciliation with God. The theme runs through different keys and various movements, but the listening ear catches it again and again ; it emerges from the chaos of the fall in the song of Moses, the servant of God ; the harps of David and Isaiah give it a distincter and sublimer utterance ; the angels breaking the silence of the midnight air, chant it over Bethlehem ; it rises more clear and waxes more loud in the doxologies of Paul, and the choruses of John, until it rolls through the arches of heaven in one magnificent choral of earth and sky, the song of Moses and the Lamb.

ADVANTAGES
OF
A WRITTEN REVELATION.

BY

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THE ADVANTAGES OF A WRITTEN REVELATION.

THE desirableness of some direct revelation from God appears from the insufficiency of our knowledge concerning the most important matters as derived from all other sources whatsoever. Natural theology has its manifest uses; but its defects also. Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, the first in order of time, as the first in character of modern deists, has argued against the necessity of Revelation on the ground of the sufficiency of the natural reason. The author of the argument was not a Pagan, but a man whose mind had been early informed as to the contents of the Christian Revelation—the brother of George Herbert, the “sweet singer of the temple.” So that he has assailed Christianity with weapons taken from its own armory; making use of the knowledge derived from Revelation to prove that Revelation was unnecessary. The circumstances in which this distinguished man issued his famous book, *De Veritate*, are among the most extraordinary in the whole history of English letters. Doubtful as to the propriety of publishing his book, he informs us, that being in his chamber, on a fair day in summer, his

window open to the South, the sun shining clear and no wind stirring, "I took," says he, "my book in my hand and devoutly kneeling, said these words: 'Oh thou eternal God, author of the light which now shines upon me, and giver of all inward illuminations, I beseech Thee of Thy infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make. I am not satisfied enough whether I shall publish this book. If it be for Thy glory, I beseech Thee, give me some sure sign from heaven; if not, I shall suppress it.' I had no sooner spoken these words but a loud and gentle voice came from the heavens, which did so comfort and cheer me, that I took my petition as granted and that I had the sign I demanded." Could anything be more extraordinary than this? An intelligent man seeking a supernatural sign to help him decide whether he should publish a book, the very object of which was to prove that a supernatural revelation was useless! Nature was never designed to be the only sufficient and infallible instructor of man. Things which are made affirm the power and Godhead of the Creator; but they are silent in regard to manifold questions concerning which we need positive information. The mechanical contrivance of that pivot on which the human head so curiously turns, is a proof of an intelligent authorship; but in regard to those manifold topics which are revolved within the cells of the brain itself—those especially which relate to the forgiveness of sins, the application of mercy, the complicate relations of duty, the quieting of a perturbed conscience, the disclosure of futurity, the continuance of existence interrupted at the grave, and the resurrection of the body, anatomy has no information to impart.

A Revelation to be given we could not, of course, prescribe the mode in which communication should be established between God and man; but the Almighty having chosen to make a Revelation in the form of permanent documents, it is proper for us to recount the many advantages of this method above every other that could be conceived. The Apostle Paul having occasion, in the course of

a Christian argument, so cite a passage from the Psalms of David, could not refrain from expressing his delight, as he does in one of his own peculiarly impassioned parentheses,* that God had employed written characters as the vehicle of His Revelation to man : a form of communication at once permanent and universal, transmitting the information originally imparted to chosen scribes, to the remotest generations of time.

I propose to mention some of the advantages which attend that method of Revelation which God has adopted ; one written volume ; advantages which we may not have sufficiently considered, because of their commonness. Nor let any pronounce this undertaking ill-timed or superfluous, since it has been a favorite argument of *infidelity* against the authenticity of the Sacred Volume, that if God had intended to make a Revelation to man, it would have been in another and better form ; and *enthusiasm* and *fanaticism* have made frequent and vehement pretensions to a superior, inward illumination, and *spiritual despotism*, in its many forms of ecclesiastical domination, has insisted much upon the authority of tradition, in the domain of religion ; against all which objections and pretensions we hold that the form in which Revelation has actually been made is not only good, but the very best that could be devised ; as might have been inferred from the character of the Being from whom the Revelation proceeded, and the beneficent design for which it was given.

The first and most obvious of those advantages now to be recited, as pertaining to this Written Revelation is, that it meets and addresses, to the highest degree, all the demands and conditions of evidence.

He who is Faithful and True, never demands faith and assent of His creatures, in the absence of all evidence ; and in advance of all Revelation, we should infer from the signs of benignity in the contrivances of nature, that any Revelation which our Creator

* Rom. i. 4.

should give to the world, would be accompanied and supported by that kind and degree of proof which would most effectually carry the convictions, and justify the belief of His rational offspring. There is no affinity between intelligent faith and weak credulity.

In the absence of a written revelation we can conceive of two methods only, by which any extraordinary disclosure of the Divine will could be made to mortals. The one is that of a special revelation made to each individual of the human species, separately and independently. The other is the selection of a certain number of persons to whom the sacred trust should be committed, by whom it should afterwards be communicated and transmitted, for the common benefit, in the form of oral tradition.

That child of fancy and passion, Jean Jacques Rousseau, with that singular compound of the visionary and the sophistical, by which his writings are characterized, has set forth this in justification of his disbelief of the Christian Scriptures, that the matters to which they pretend to relate are confessedly of such infinite importance, that God could not have exposed any to the possibility of doubt, by confining His revelation concerning them to a few, but would certainly have made a miraculous communication to each and every individual of the whole species; which assertion, to have any force whatever, must imply that a revelation made after the form thus suggested, would be better fitted to produce a full and irresistible belief than the one with which we are now familiar.

Now, by the supposition, a miracle of some sort is to be wrought, to authenticate a specific revelation to be made to each and every individual. That is to say, there are to be as many miracles as there are individuals to be convinced. But this involves a contradiction of terms. The force of a miracle lies in its being the exception to universal experience. But, according to this idea of the Genevan Skeptic, miracles repeated in the case of every individual of the human species, would be no exception, but a concurrence of

universal experience. A miracle in any case, is by the very terms supposed, an impossibility.

Again, unless we assume the revelation made to each individual of the race is so copious and ample in its range, as to cover the whole field of human duty, embracing the whole code of morals: obligations to his God and his fellow-mortals; and moreover, that every individual is endowed with such extraordinary faculties that he can retain in his memory, a faithful record of this vast amount of imparted knowledge, you meet a necessity that a revelation should be repeated, just as often as the occasion arises for new information, and the memory should be at a loss in regard to what was already given, which necessity involves as many repetitions of attesting miracles; and so again we encounter an absurdity, for a perpetual repetition of miracles is a contradiction of terms.

The evidence of the senses is a most satisfactory method of conviction. But it is well to remind those who attach so much importance to a revelation made to each individual, that there is such a thing as deception practiced upon the senses. The Egyptian magicians were thought by wondering spectators to be working miracles when, in fact, according to their own subsequent confession, they were only practicing legerdemain. Instruction is to be derived, bearing upon this point from those exhibitions of slight-of-hand which seem truly marvellous, and supernatural even to ordinary eyes—but which the performer admits to be nothing but feats of cleverness, the success of an acquired art. Admit now that at some period of his life, a communication from God were made to each individual of the human race, and that it were proved to be such by some marvel, such as convinced Moses at Horeb, Elijah at Carmel, Abraham at Mamre, what would be the probability as to the abiding impression of the scene, as the individual recedes from it in point of time? Let it be imagined withal that the revelation made was unwelcome to him who received it, and that he was desirous, if possible, as many now are in regard

to the written word, to evade its force. What would be easier than to dispose of the remote miracle, by classing it at length, with the marvels and cleverness of an undetected but acknowledged thaumaturgy. The impression made by any one disclosure, must grow fainter and fainter the farther the individual recedes from the point of its occurrence.

Notwithstanding the pretensions of the skeptic, we have yet to see, wherein an immediate revelation made to each individual (not to speak now of the unsuitableness of such a method for the purpose of a rational probation) has one advantage over that form of communication which God has actually employed: while the disadvantages of such a method, in point of proof and evidence, are both numerous and obvious. Were we to describe a state of complete chaos and confusion, in which there was no certain criterion of right and wrong, truth and falsehood—in which reason should be displaced by fancy, and fancy should be most wild and delirious; would we fill the world with impostures and illusions, we would suppose that very condition of things which Rousseau has affirmed to be desirable; in which there should be no Written Word as the common and universal standard of belief and practice, but each and every individual asserted his own inspiration, related his own dream, referred to his own miracle, described his own vision, claimed his own revelation,—all which however much they might contradict one another, would, by the terms of the supposition be incapable either of rational proof or refutation.

As to such as claim the superiority of their own “intuitions,” or “moral sense,” or “private conscience,” to any written Revelation, thus arguing that any other inspired authority is superfluous, the briefest answer will suffice, “If the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?” The conscience may be so perverted as to become the ringleader in all mischief; as Saul of Tarsus thought he was doing God service, when imbuing his hands in the blood of the saints. There is a psychological necessity that

a man should act in accordance with what he thinks to be right: as a ship steers according to her own compass: but the compass is itself subject to variation, and the very object of Revelation is to correct the mistakes of the individual judgment, to enlighten and inform the human conscience by a Divine infallibility.

In whatever light, therefore, we compare these two methods of observation, the one made to each individual separately, the other, universal in its character, the common standard of right, the last appeal in regard to what is true, the more convinced are we of the vast preponderance of advantages in favor of the inspired volume, as best suited to human use and conviction, and most in accordance with the proper objects of probation, and the majesty of God.

Besides the mode of Revelation already described—one made to each individual separately—in the absence of inspired Scripture we can conceive of only one other: and that is a direct disclosure made to a few, who, with adequate credentials of their mission, should by means of oral communication, become the instructors of the race.

This mode of communicating His will to men, was the earliest in point of time, employed by the Supreme. This was when the population of the world was yet limited and a special arrangement was instituted, in the longevity of the divine legates for the purpose of counteracting, so far as possible, the natural tendency of unwritten tradition, and perpetuating the knowledge of God in the world. Was an immediate revelation made to Adam, by His Creator? Adam was retained upon the earth for many centuries; a living witness to the truth; a most extraordinary compensation, by which the ages were interwoven together: the past brought down into contact with the present and the future: and the future and remote brought up to hold converse with the hoary past. Notwithstanding this prodigious expedient, let the history of the ancient world testify how ineffectual was this method of Revelation. The knowledge of God almost entirely died out and heaven decreed the destruction of the race.

Of all methods of communication, oral tradition must be pronounced the most imperfect. As persons differ in feature and in mind so always in their mode of expressing ideas, or repeating facts. The incident mentioned by Sir Walter Raleigh, in the preface to his history, illustrates the ease with which any considerable number of persons, with no intention of making a false impression, will invariably deviate from exact uniformity in the recital of the same transaction. Truth and facts imperceptibly become tinged with the qualities of the persons who undertake to give them a statement, just as streams are colored by the infusion of the soil through which they pass.

So far as rules of evidence are concerned, tradition is not for a moment to be compared with written records. Not so easily may it be weighed and measured; more easily does it elude investigation and analysis. It has nothing of stability and certainty. It becomes weak and uncertain in proportion as it is extended outward and downward from its original source. Each repetition of the unwritten word multiplies the probabilities of its being alloyed by foreign mixtures till at length the report itself is either lost irreclaimably, or its character for correctness is so far changed, that no authority can be attached to its voice. The Evangelist John informs us near the close of his inspired narrative, that many more things were said and done by our Lord than he had attempted to record: which, indeed, according to the striking method of his style, were they all written the world itself could not have contained the books which should convey them.* What do we at this distance of time know concerning these unrecorded sayings and deeds of our Divine Lord? That they were well known, and much esteemed, and often recited by the contemporaries of our Lord, and their immediate successors, appears from the fact—that one of them—a striking aphorism—“It is more blessed to give than to receive”—was caught and retained by the Apostle Paul, which, otherwise

* Joh. xxi. 25.

would have shared the fate of its fellows, transmitted for a while from mouth to mouth, from family to family, from generation to generation, till at last all memory, all knowledge of these unwritten words had faded entirely away, as the circle on the water grows fainter and more indistinct, the wider it spreads, till it subsides forever from view.

In regard to the matter of evidence, if we may use such an expression, God has acted towards men with a degree of fairness which ought to win our admiration. He has given a fixed and permanent form to His revelation, as if for the very purpose of courting and challenging scrutiny. In advance of all investigation of their contents, the Scriptures of God impress us with their honesty, and their divinity, by trusting themselves alone in the world in such a form as invites examination, as if themselves desirous of being tested at every point by the established rules of evidence and rejoicing in the result of accumulated and combined investigation. Let not the space we have given to this part of our subject be thought extravagant, inasmuch as there has been a constant proneness, during all the melancholy eclipses of the Church, to exalt tradition to a degree of authority either paramount to that of the Scriptures or co-ordinate with it. Such an acknowledgment of the value of tradition may be allowed when men in their secular affairs are known to attach the same importance to rumors passing from mouth to mouth, or the distant echoes of reputed events, as to written records signed, sealed and attested. Superstition has no such servitor as *tradition*; and aside from all positive testimony of the Scriptures themselves on this subject, the last thing we are disposed to credit is, that God should intrust one truth, one rite, of any measure of importance and validity, to this variable and questionable mode of transmission. While every instinct of our nature prompts us to all respect and reverence for that which is old and well established, we are afraid of dividing the authority of that which was written, with anything beside, most of all with oral tradition,

which confessing itself at first to be subordinate to Scripture, at length aims to supersede it—as wild vines attaching themselves to a tree, in course of time, cover it all over with a mass of foreign foliage and smother out the life from the branches, which once they aspired to adorn.

We have spoken thus far of the superiority of a written revelation in regard to the kind or degree of evidence by which it is substantiated. The evidence in support of the Scriptures is not of the description which precludes the possibility of doubt. One so disposed may invent ingenious doubts against any kind or degree of evidence. Miracles themselves have not always carried conviction. Many who saw the wonderful works of Christ retained their unbelief. Inasmuch as the authority of the Holy Scriptures is substantiated by moral evidence, it is possible, of course, to suggest doubts; but it is not possible to conceive of a case in which doubts are fewer and feebler, and direct evidence more overpowering. This was very clearly illustrated by the celebrated brochure of Archbishop Whateley, entitled “*Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte.*” The proof of the sacred Scriptures is not only good, but it is the *very best* that can be conceived. We cannot imagine a case in which proof could be stronger. So said our Lord. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose unto them from the dead.” Contrasting the two modes of revelation—written and unwritten in regard to the evidence by which each is authenticated—we find that one becomes diluted and uncertain in the lapse of time, while the other, the volume of Scripture, accumulates and multiplies its proofs in the progress of years; the very fact of its faithful and perpetual transmission, gathering about itself a weight of testimony which it is hard to resist. Passing the light-houses on the coast, the farther we depart from them the fainter their glimmer, till at last they are sunk entirely from view; but before us, above us, there is a star which never dims nor changes, and wherever we sail that fixed

luminary at the pole confirms our confidence by the constancy and steadiness of its light. Not less palpable is the distinction between shifting, fading traditions, and the light of inspired Scripture, growing brighter and brighter the farther we advance on our voyage to immortality.

Nor is it only in the department of *evidence* that the superiority of Scripture is apparent. Let us consider also its *practical utility*.

Here is a Volume, by no means cumbersome in size, which claims to contain the substance of the several communications made by God to man, during a space of many centuries. Diversified as are its several parts in topic and style—a diversity running through the whole scale of prose and poetry, argument and song, history and apocalypse, proverb and precept, dirge and carol—there is, nevertheless, such a unity in its contents, as itself to be an argument for its Divine origin,—for collusion among writers living fifteen centuries apart, is impossible. Proceeding from one mind, it relates to one theme: the Redemption of the human race, by the Incarnate Son of God. Assured that there is but one Redemption, we are assured also, that there is but one Revelation. This is so rounded and completed and sufficient, that no other is necessary. It precludes, by its own claims, the expectation of any other disclosures, inasmuch as those already made are ample for our guidance in this life, and our salvation in the life to come. The peculiarity of the Volume is, that it is the *only* infallible rule of human faith and duty.

Concerning their mode of Revelation, we say that it is available for all people. When the Book was in the process of formation, by its one Divine Author, there was a particular order of men, who alone were the depositaries of the Divine will. God spake to prophet and priest, through whom and by whom the Revelation was imparted to others. It was from their lips, and from their's only, that the people had knowledge. Prophet and Priest, therefore, had an office, and an authority at such

a time, which none can claim at present. There is no warrant now for sacerdotal supremacy, nor ecclesiastical dictation ; since an earthly ministry is no longer the only channel of Divine communication ; nor has the preacher of the Word any other method of ascertaining the will of God on any subject, than what is within the reach of all other men, on the same terms of diligent, and candid, and prayerful study. The oracles of God no longer have a fixed locality. We journey not to Bethel, or Carmel, or Jerusalem to consult an anointed priesthood, when we would know the will of our Maker. Here is a Volume which is accessible to all people and at all times. Death was it, in ancient times, for a private person to intrude into the awful mysteries of Tabernacle and Temple ; but here is the true Holy of Holies, inviting all men, without regard to nation, office, dress or name, to come into direct converse with God. Here, as in a vast whispering-gallery, are brought to our ears all the voices which God has employed in former ages of the world in communicating His will to men. We are made contemporaries with the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles. With Moses we stand on the summit of Sinai and hear the words of the Law. With Samuel, in the stillness of the sleepless night, we listen to the voice of God. With David, in exile, in camp, at court, at tabernacle, we raise our inspired songs of praise and gladness. With Isaiah we are enraptured by the inspired glories of the Redeemer's kingdom. With Jeremy, we too, amid sobs and woes, may behold the Sun of Righteousness through every rift of the storm ; and with John, we to-day may recline at the same table with Christ and lean our heads upon His bosom, soothed and comforted by the soft breathings of His love. No exclusiveness—no favoritism—no monopoly—no official—no national prerogatives now. Wide open stand the temple gates of the New Jerusalem, inviting every creature to approach and enter. No longer has the Jew this advantage, that to him are committed the oracles of God. They are now with every man who will receive them. True, when

Revelation was yet unwritten, that it was local, and restricted, dwelling within curtains, and upon the lips of a prescribed order. All walls of partition are now broken down forever—and the whole human race may have free range at all times through those open courts, where Inspiration proclaims the “common salvation.” Judaism had its Urim and Thummim ; and Paganism its pretended oracles ; but all these real or pretended methods were as local as the person of the mitred Priest, or the fane at Delphi and Crete. That passage from the pen of Cicero, in his oration for the poet Archias, more than nineteen hundred years ago, in which he declaims on the utility of books, is still fresh and familiar to all scholars throughout the world. “Other things pertain,” says he, “to times, and ages, and places, but these instruct youth, delight age, adorn prosperity, afford solace and relief to adversity, give pleasure at home, and do not burden abroad, they lodge with us, they travel with us, they rusticate with us.” With what force may all this be applied to the Book of God ! This *portable* Revelation may be the companion of all men, at all times, to all places. Instead of being confined, like the Sibylline Books, at the Roman Capitol, in a chest of gold, under an official custodian, every mariner may take it with him when he goes forth upon the sea ; the traveler, far removed from the sound of the Sabbath bell, and the voice of the living ministry, carries this wherever he goes : the emigrant, departing from his native land, is not separated from the Revelation of God : it is in the hands of the child at school, of the old man at the head-springs of wisdom, the soldier takes it into camp and battle, the collier bears it down with him into the depths of the earth, and the prisoner, deprived of all human society, is not so lonely and forlorn as to be without this inspiration of the Almighty. We cannot conceive now of any circumstances so deplorable, no distance so great, no solitude so complete, in which this written Revelation of God may not be accessible and available. The loss of the senses does not interrupt communication with the Almighty through this medium.

Blindness does not exclude this Divine light ; vision shut out from the rayless eye as at one of the miracles of Christ wakes in the sensitive finger to trace the very characters which record this universal Revelation. When memory, amid the infirmities and gathering mists of age, could not be trusted to recall what was said and heard, that which was written aforetime is present with its sensible help, to afford comfort and hope. An aged believer, in the last century, when dying, called for his Bible, and discovering that his sight was gone, requested that it might be opened at the eighth chapter of Romans, and his finger guided to these words : “ I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Deepening the pressure of his finger, as the words were recited, he said, just as he fell asleep : “ God be with you, my children ; we sat together at table this morning ; to-night I shall sup with Christ in the kingdom of God.” Something more was it for a support to this aged saint, whose failing faculties were unequal to any exertion than the echo of a remembered tradition, for beneath his palsied hand, tremulous in death, were the very words, sure and steadfast, of that everlasting covenant of God, which is the end of all fear and trembling.

And this suggests yet another advantage pertaining to a Written Revelation—that by continuous use it accumulates a power and influence of its own. I speak not now of the cumulative character of the evidences by which the Holy Scriptures are authenticated ; the aggregate of the proof from things without and things within the Book itself ; but rather of the associations which gather, in course of time, about this visible object, as they never could about unwritten articulations.

An ordinary *family Bible* most readily illustrates my meaning. It is no novelty, startling by its strangeness, but more than anything else that can be named, a familiar object, hallowed with the

most potent associations of home. With nothing superstitious about it, it becomes the visible exponent of religion and witness for God, in our dwelling. It bears the names of our ancestors. It contains the records of those events—marriages, births and deaths—which constitute the history of families. It is thus an heir-loom, coming into our possession, freighted with the blessings, and prayers, and experience of our fathers. We cannot look at it without being reminded of the many by whom it has been read with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It speaks to us of the faith of those who have gone before. It bears the marks of their frequent and devout reading. There are pages which seem to us to have been wet with the tears of penitence and gratitude. Eyes, long since sealed in death, have traced those very characters, now in our possession, and kindled with gladness. I will not call it a palladium—I use no poetic, no fanciful term—but speak only of those manifold memories and associations which time accumulates around an object so sacred and familiar in aid of that inspired truth which it transmits.

Or the copy of the Divine Revelation now in use, may be your own, in a more particular sense. It may have been your companion now for many years. It may have been given to you at some memorable epoch of your life, accompanied by wise and tender counsels, second only to those which inspiration breathed into the Volume itself. Possibly the copy you have was sent to you by a friend, just before death, with the request, that you would read it after he was gone. Pencil marks, here and there, attract your attention to particular verses, which bore comfort and illumination into the sick-chamber and the valley of death. As you take it in hand its well-worn covers have a voice and a fragrance, which remind you of the past and of heaven.

Or this Book was read by you with special interest at particular seasons of your life. This is the very copy in which you read the great and faithful sayings of Christ, which brought hope

to your soul. The oftener you have read it, the more is it prized. Accretions are constantly made to its power over you; the longer it is retained, the more frequently it is consulted.

Or, the copy which you hold in your hand, may suggest to you matters of graver public interest. There have been many libraries like that of the late Duke of Sussex, and that of the American Bible Society, designed to collect, so far as possible, different editions and copies of the Word of God. Casting your eye over such a collection, and supposing it to be complete, you are impressed profoundly by this cumulative influence of the Holy Scriptures. We have no faith in what Southey calls Bibliolatry—the worship of books—but what awe, what power, come over us in the presence of some of these volumes.

Here is a massive copy of the Scriptures in Syriac; its pages discolored by age, its covers honey-combed by moths, which a missionary has brought from Oriental fastnesses. Should Samuel rise from the dead, with silver beard, and bended form, would you be more affected, than by the sight of this old, venerable, and speechless witness for God, surviving, through slow and weary centuries the patient scribe who prepared it?

Here is the very copy of the Bible, which, on accredited testimony, was once the property of John Milton; a small volume, of ordinary type, but immense in the memories with which it is associated. And this was the very fountain whence that old prophet drew his inspirations of liberty, and those potent thoughts which lifted him to the “height of his great argument.” Under the spell which for the moment binds you, you meditate on what the Bible has accomplished throughout the world, in the interest of human rights, the advocacy of freedom, and the promotion of letters.

Hard by is a copy of the Bible, translated by John Elliot into the language of the North American Indians; the first book, it is claimed, ever printed on this continent. Forthwith your mind starts off to recount the magnificent achievements which have been

wrought by our religion, in converting barbaric tribes, over all the earth, to the dignity and glory of the Christian faith.

Here you take in hand the small Latin Bible of Martin Luther, a prize which Gustavus Adolphus brought with him out of Germany, the very lever, by which, in his own lifetime, that great Reformer lifted up fifty millions of people into religious and political liberty ; and there rushes over you the memory of all which the Bible has accomplished on two continents for the assertion of popular rights, the reform of abuses, and the general advancement of the species.

Here is a copy of the first edition of the English Version, which Tyndale, from his retreat at Antwerp, sent, like heated shot, into the bigotry and intolerance of Papal England.

Here is the book which Queen Elizabeth pressed to her heart on the day of her coronation, as the source and secret of her country's prosperity. The right to possess and to read it, became the exponent of the democratic idea in its purest form, and so the soul of modern history ; far around this simple object—the Bible—emerging like the milk-white hind of the fable safe from all perils, have surged all the debates, and wars, revolutions and martyrdoms, which have promoted the rights and interests of modern society. Associations of this description, and they might be multiplied to any extent—are constantly accumulating about this volume of Scripture, and if they do not amount to a logical proof of its Divinity, they are a prodigious power in aid of its contents.

Not to prolong this train of remark, we mention but one other advantage pertaining to a written Revelation. The ease with which it may be copied and circulated. The sight of a printed Bible is the best argument for its circulation. Had God intended the disclosure of His will for a certain few, by them to be retained as a secret trust, He would have whispered it to them in the visions of the night. But a book was as obviously intended to be read and handled, copied and multiplied, as were our eyes and hands for

their appropriate uses. Accustomed to admire that invention of modern times, by which copies of the Word of God can be so expeditiously and economically multiplied, the particular period when this art of printing came into use, should not escape our grateful notice. Had it synchronized with the completion of the Sacred Canon, it would have been easy for mistakes to creep into the inspired text, which of necessity would have been extensively propagated with scarcely a possibility of correction. Copied as were the Scriptures by the hand of the scribe, with immense care and labor, and in numbers comparatively few, it is easy to satisfy ourselves as to the accuracy and fidelity of the manuscript.

The inspired text accurately settled and carefully preserved, through ages of turmoil and darkness, like Moses in his ark of bulrushes, in due course of events, a new epoch of Providential development is reached and the world is furnished with the means of multiplying the sacred deposit to any extent, and with an astonishing rapidity. "The power of the press" is an expression volubly repeated; but who has any adequate comprehension of it? A power visibly represented by so much wood, metal and ink, which not only perpetuates knowledge, beyond all the burnings of Alexandrian libraries, but makes it as common and diffusive as the air and light of heaven. Revelation given in such a form, every man may take part in its distribution. The touch of a profane and unofficial hand upon the ark of testimony was a capital offence. But now every hand may share in the glory of that simple mechanical process by which the Revelation of God is multiplied in copies, numerous as the leaves of autumn. Those too illiterate to transcribe the text, or to pronounce upon its correctness, may do as much for its copying, and its circulation, as the most accurate scribe, and the most erudite of scholars. The mite of a poor widow, the gift of a little child, now ensures a copy of the Book of God, which once would have required years of manual toil, and commanded for its purchase sacrifices even from the affluent.

The opportunity of doing good implies the obligation to do good. The winter of the world has passed, and the genial spring has come, when we are invited to scatter abroad the precious seed. Versions multiplied and approved by Christian scholarship, we can give to every man a faithful transcript of the Divine Revelation, in the tongue wherein he was born. It seems like a direct controversy with God, to withhold from any that word which He has designed for every creature. Cruelty refined is it, to burn waxen candles over the dead, and deny divine light to the living. The true keys committed to the Christian Church, are not those that pretend by a mortal will, to unlock the gates of Paradise for such as die, but those which open the treasures of truth and grace, in the inspired Scriptures, to all the human race. Little less than to be Divine ourselves, is this power of giving a Divine Book to all our fellow-men. It is as if we were ourselves inspired, to be able, with our own hands, to send an infallible inspiration among all the varied tribes of the earth. It kindles our enthusiasm to know that though Abraham has long been dead, we may resuscitate his faith, in ancient Chaldea and among all the progeny of his, as the stars of heaven for number; that, through our agency Moses again may walk among the chosen tribes, uttering the words of God's law; Job may revisit the tents of Edom; David wake again with holy Psalms, the echoes of Hermon and Zion; that Paul, a master among learned minds, may stand again on the Acropolis to speak of Jesus and the Resurrection; and that Christ Himself, by those words of His which are spirit and life, may walk not only by the Sea of Galilee, and in the streets of Jerusalem, but wherever there is a human habitation, inviting all the weary to come unto Him for rest.

Amid all the revolutions, wars and woes of the world; where worldly wisdom is most perplexed and all human faith dispirited, we may cheer the nations with that Apocalypse from the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, which promises the future triumph of righteousness and peace. Those glorious predictions which ages

ago were uttered by the hallowed lips of Isaiah concerning the universal kingdom of our Lord upon the earth made even the harp of the pagan bard to vibrate with unconscious prophecies and echoes in the Pollio of Virgil. All the confidence we feel as to the future of the human race has for its basis not sagacious conjecture but the positive assurance of INSPIRED SCRIPTURE, explaining the object for which the world was made, and disclosing the splendors of that kingdom of God among men, which will be universal and eternal.

CHRIST'S

TESTIMONY TO CHRISTIANITY.

AN APOLOGETIC LECTURE,

DELIVERED IN PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY, 1871,

BY

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CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO CHRISTIANITY.

EIGHTEEN hundred years ago there lived, among a despised nation and in a remote country, a man by the name of Jesus, a carpenter's son, who had no political power, no social position, no secular learning or art, no wealth, no shelter to call His own, and who after a very brief public career was crucified in His youth by His own countrymen as a blasphemer. Yet this humble Rabbi by the force of His doctrine and example, without shedding a drop of blood, save His own, has silently accomplished the greatest moral revolution on record, founded the mightiest and the only stable empire, and is now recognized and adored by the most civilized nations of the globe as the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind.

This fact is astounding, and stands out alone, unapproached and unapproachable in its glory. It overpowers all other historic events, and throws the achievements of heroes, sages, poets, scholars and statesmen of ancient and modern times far into the shade.

This fact is undisputed, and admitted even by skeptics and infidels. To deny it would be as unreasonable as to deny the sun in heaven, or the existence of man on earth. Let us hear but a few voices of men of acknowledged genius and culture, who widely dissent from the humble faith of Christians, yet testify to the unsurpassed and unsurpassable greatness of Jesus. Goethe, who charac-

terized himself as a decided non-Christian,* and as a “child of the world between two prophets,”† in one of his last utterances expressed the conviction, that the human mind, no matter how much it may advance in intellectual culture and in the extent and depth of the knowledge of nature, will never transcend the height and moral culture of Christianity, as it shines and glows in the canonical Gospels.‡ Napoleon the Great, after he had subdued and lost again the half of Europe, said, among other striking things: “I search in vain in history to find one equal to Jesus Christ; anything which can approach the gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or explain it.” Strauss, the keenest antagonist of the gospel history, is constrained to admit, that “Jesus represents within the sphere of religion the culmination point, beyond which posterity can never go, yea, which it can not even equal . . . that He remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought; and that no perfect piety is possible without His presence in the heart.” Renan, the more brilliant, but less learned Strauss of France, concludes his “Life of Jesus” with the following eloquent prediction: “Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; His legend will call forth tears without end; His suffer-

* In a letter to Lavater, 1782: “Ich bin kein *Unchrist*, kein *Widerchrist*, doch ein decidirter *Nichtchrist*.”

† “Prophete rechts, Prophete links,
Das Weltkind in der Mitten.”

The prophet on the right side was Lavater, and the (pseudo-) prophet on the left Basedow.

‡ *Gespräche mit Eckermann*, Vol. III, p. 373:

“Mag die geistige Cultur nur immer fortschreiten, mögen die Naturwissenschaften in immer breiterer Ausdehnung und Tiefe wachsen und der menschliche Geist sich erweitern wie er will: über die Hoheit und sittliche Cultur des Christenthums, wie es in den Evangelien schimmert und leuchtet, wird er nicht hinaus kommen.”

ings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."*

This deepest and broadest fact in the history of the race which surrounds us like an ocean from every direction, calls for an explanation. The explanation must be reasonable. The cause assigned must correspond with the effect produced.

Such an explanation we find in the history of Christ and His testimony concerning Himself, as recorded by the Evangelists, and believed by Christians of all creeds.

THE INFIDEL EXPLANATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

The gospel history must either be *true*, or *false*.

If false, it must be, in its essential, supernatural features, either a wilful *lie*, or an innocent *fiction*; in other words, the product of *imposture*, or of *delusion*.

In both cases the responsibility may be fastened either on Christ Himself, or on the apostles and evangelists.

Consequently we may conceive of four infidel constructions of the life of Christ which exhaust the range of logical possibility. They have all been tried from the days of Celsus to those of Renan; and the resources of talent, learning, ingenuity and skill are well nigh exhausted in the attempt to disprove the truth and to prove the falsehood of the story of Jesus of Nazareth. No new phase of infidelity can be expected which is not of necessity a repetition or modification of one of the four exploded theories. But unbelief, like belief, will go on in the Church militant to the end of time, and every new assault upon the old fortress will be repulsed by the defenders, and, in its defeat, furnish a fresh proof of the truth of Christ's prophecy, that the gates of Hades shall never prevail against his Church. A brief examination of the infidel theories must suffice for our purpose.

* For these and many similar testimonies, I beg leave to refer to my book on the "Person of Christ."

THE CHRIST OF IMPOSTURE.

The imposture may be traced either directly to CHRIST, or to His DISCIPLES.

I. The oldest enemies of Christ, the Pharisees and Hierarchs of His day, followed by a few obscure infidels of later times, charged CHRIST Himself with being an impostor and a blasphemer, who made His credulous disciples believe that He was the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind, while He knew Himself to be a mere man. In this case we must pronounce Him a consummate hypocrite, who falls under the condemnation of His own terrible rebuke of hypocrisy. And yet it is now universally acknowledged, even by infidels themselves, that He preached the purest code of morals and lived the purest life, crowned with the noblest death.

How then can one and the same character be at once the very best and the very worst? The contradiction is as monstrous as that white is black and black is white. How could He play the hypocrite in view of poverty, persecution and crucifixion, as his certain and only reward in this life? How could He keep up the play without even for a moment falling out of his role and showing his true colors? How could such a wicked scheme find universal acceptance and produce greater and better results than any which human wisdom and goodness before or since has been able to achieve, or even to conceive?

These questions are unanswerable. The hypothesis is logically so untenable and morally so revolting, that its mere statement is its condemnation. No scholar has seriously endeavored to carry it out.

II. Others fasten the fraud upon the first DISCIPLES of Christ, and represent them as the cunning intriguers and successful deceivers, who manufactured the story of the resurrection and persuaded the world into it at the sacrifice of their very lives.

But the first and last impression which the Gospels irresistibly make upon every fair-minded reader is that of the artless simplicity

and honesty of the writers. We may contest their learning, critical sagacity and worldly wisdom, but it is impossible to deny their good faith ; it shines forth from every line, it is even strengthened by the many discrepancies in minor details, and it was sealed with their own blood. Goethe, as good a judge of literary productions as ever lived, deliberately said : "I consider the Gospels as thoroughly genuine (*durchaus ächt*), for there is reflected in them a majesty and sublimity which emanated from the person of Christ, and which is as truly divine as anything ever seen on earth."

We can conceive of no motive which might have induced these simple-hearted Galileans to engage in such a dangerous intrigue before all the world. And how could they keep the secret of the conspiracy ? And what must we think of the intelligence of the Jews, Greeks and Romans of that age, that they could be duped by a handful of illiterate fishermen ? Was Saul of Tarsus the man to be so easily fooled into a life of martyrdom by a cunning lie of the very men whom he once so bitterly persecuted ? Such questions present insuperable difficulties which no learning or ingenuity has been or ever will be able to solve.

The hypothesis of wilful deception in either of its two possible forms is an insult to the dignity of human nature itself, which instinctively shrinks from it. Unable to maintain this ground, infidelity has of late confined itself to the conjecture of innocent fiction.

THE CHRIST OF FICTION.

Here again the delusion may be traced either to CHRIST Himself, or to his DISCIPLES.

I. The first alternative assumes that JESUS was an ENTHUSIAST who deceived Himself, a noble dreamer and imagined that He was the Son of God and the promised Messiah and died a victim to this delusion.

But the Christ of the Gospels shows not the faintest trace of fanaticism, or self-delusion. On the contrary, He discouraged and

opposed all the prevailing carnal ideas and hopes of the Messiah, as a supposed political reformer and emancipator. He is calm, self-possessed, uniformly consistent, free from all passion and undue excitement, never desponding, ever confident of success even in the darkest hour of trial and persecution. To every perplexing question He quickly returned the wisest answer; He never erred in His judgment of men or things; from the beginning to the close of His public life, before friend and foe, before magistrate and people, in disputing with Pharisees and Sadducees, in addressing His disciples or the multitude, while standing before Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas, or suspended on the cross, He shows an unclouded intellect and complete mastery of appetite and passion,—in short all the qualities the very opposite to those which characterize persons laboring under self-delusion or any mental disease.

II. But may not his DISCIPLES have been SELF-DECEIVED and unduly carried away by the exemplary life and death, the words and deeds of their Master, so as to work up their imagination to the honest belief that he was really the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and a supernatural being that came down from heaven?

In other words, the gospel history is put on a par with heathen myths (by Strauss), or Christian legends (by Renan), and thus turned into a poem or fiction of a pious excited imagination, on the basis of a small capital of actual fact.

This is the least discreditable of all false theories, because it leaves room for a high estimate of the moral character of Christ and His apostles. Christ must have been a very extraordinary person to account at all for the extraordinary impression He made, and the Apostles may escape with the complimentary censure of an excess of pious imagination and admiration.

But the Evangelists are singularly free from imaginative coloring. They are the most objective of all historians; they abstain from every intrusion of their own feelings and reflections, even when they record the most exciting scenes, the bitterest persecution and

the deepest sufferings of their Master. Their individuality is lost in the events which are supposed to speak best for themselves without note or comment. How different in this respect from the Apocryphal Gospels, which abound in the crude inventions of a morbid imagination. We are moreover at a loss to conceive that the Apostles and Evangelists, gifted, as they were, with as clear eyes and as sound common sense as other observers, could make such a radical mistake as is here supposed. How could so many deceive themselves at the same time and in the same way? Is it at all likely that five hundred persons, to whom the risen Christ is said to have appeared at the same time, should dream the same dream? And all this not in a period of childlike simplicity and ignorance, but in a period of high culture and skeptical criticism, in a land and a people where the story of Jesus was everywhere known, and surrounded by bitter hostility eager to dispel and expose the delusion. How could the keen, sharp and persecuting Paul be so thoroughly converted to an empty fiction? How incredible that some illiterate fishermen should have invented a far higher and more perfect life and character than the poets, philosophers and historians of Greece and Rome! The poet in this case, as Rousseau, himself an unbeliever, well said, must have been greater than the hero. It takes more than a Jesus (*i. e.* a greater than the greatest, which is an impossibility) to invent a Jesus. And how could an *imaginary* resurrection which took place only in the visionary faith of the disciples, or, as Renan says, "in the passion of a hallucinated woman," lay the foundation of such a rock-like institution as the Christian Church?

Just here the mythical and legendary hypothesis breaks down completely, and is driven to the only alternative of truth or fraud. Innocent fiction will not do in the case of the resurrection of Christ, or even the resurrection of Lazarus, of which Spinoza remarked that, if he could believe it, he would embrace the whole Christian

system, because, as the greatest of Christ's miracles, it involves the less.

In this case Renan, unable to find a better solution, departs from his own theory, and is not ashamed to resort to the wretched hypothesis of a fraud, contrived by Lazarus and his two sisters, and weakly connived at by Jesus himself in the vain hope of producing a revolution in his favor among the unbelieving Jews. And such a Jesus who could willingly play the charlatan, and thus outrage the principle of ordinary honesty, Renan would make us believe nevertheless to have been the greatest and purest of men who ever walked on earth, and who will never be surpassed in time to come!

Credat Judæus Appella.

The false theories then are perfect failures as far as an explanation of the great fact of Christ is concerned. They put a severer tax on our credulity than orthodoxy itself. Instead of solving or diminishing difficulties, they increase them and substitute a moral monstrosity in the place of a supernatural miracle. They are calculated to shake the faith in man as well as in God. They contradict each other, and one has in turn refuted the other. After completing its course, infidelity in its latest phase, when brought to the test of the resurrection miracle, is forced to resort to its first and most disreputable form, and thus to fall under its own sentence of condemnation, which it pronounced upon the wretched scheme of fraud.

And, indeed, this is the only alternative: the gospel history is either true, or it is a shameless, wicked fraud in which Christ himself was the chief actor. The shrewd, cunning Pharisees and Sadducees who watched his movements with the vigilance of intense jealousy and hatred, felt this; they heard his amazing speeches with their own ears; they witnessed his miracles with their own eyes; how gladly would they have denied them and resorted to the mythical or legendary fiction-theory of modern times; but being unable to contradict the testimony of their senses

and the common observation of the people, they derived his miracles from Beelzebub, and crucified Christ as an impostor and blasphemer. But the resurrection and the triumph of Christianity on the ruins of the Jewish theocracy was the triumphant answer to this wicked calumny.

The latest critical examination of the records of Christ's history, written by a Unitarian, comes to this irresistible conclusion : "Wonderful is the character of Jesus. And hardly less wonderful is the manner in which it is portrayed in the Gospels, undesignedly, by brief, sketchy narratives of a variety of incidents, strung together with only the slightest regard to their right order and connection, and yet yielding a result of unequalled moral beauty and of a world-saving power,—a result, self-consistent, all-consistent, and spontaneous, because, let me reiterate, the incidents narrated are *true*."*

Verily, the history of Jesus, his words and miracles, his crucifixion and resurrection, witnessed by the rulers and the people, friend and foe, Herod and Pilate, Jews and Romans, related by his Disciples with unmistakable simplicity and honesty, proclaimed from Jerusalem to Rome, believed by contemporaries of every grade of culture, sealed by the blood of martyrs, producing the mightiest results, felt and demonstrated in its power from day to day wherever his name is known, is the best-authenticated history in the world.

THE CHRIST OF HISTORY.

The more we examine the Christ of the Gospels, the more we find that He carries in himself his own best evidence, like the sun in heaven which proves its existence and power by shining on the firmament to all but the blind. "I am one," He says, "that bear witness of Myself."

Much as the Evangelists differ in minor details and in their stand-point and aim, they nevertheless present only the various as-

* *Jesus*, by W. H. Furness, Philadelphia, 1870, p. 223.

pects of the one and the same Christ. Matthew, writing for Jewish readers, sets Him forth as the new Lawgiver and King of Israel in whom all the prophecies are fulfilled ; Mark paints Him, in fresh, rapid sketches, for the world-conquering Romans, as the mighty Son of God and worker of miracles of power ; Luke, the physician and Hellenist, describes Him to Greek readers as the Healer of diseases, the Friend of sinners, the Saviour of the lost, the sympathizing and ideal Son of Man ; John who wrote last and wrote for Christians of all nations and ages, gives us the Gospel of the incarnate Logos, the only Begotten of the Father, who became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. But these are not contradictory, but complementary pictures of one and the same person.

The essential identity of the Christ of the Synoptists is universally conceded. As to the identity of the Synoptic and the Johannine Christ, it has indeed been disputed by a small class of modern critics ; but the Church at large has never doubted it, and the common reader of the Gospels can perceive no difference affecting in the least degree the character and authority of Christ. Certainly in all the features of His moral character and the object of his mission, as well as in the principal events of his earthly life there is the most perfect agreement among the canonical Gospels. He is in all of them the same original, consistent, sinless and perfect being from the beginning to the close of his public life.

His character is in the first place *original* beyond all other men who have a just claim to originality. History furnishes no parallel to Jesus of Nazareth. The fertile imagination of poets has never conceived a character like his. No system of moral philosophy among the ancient Greeks and Romans set up such a standard of purity and perfection as Christ not only taught but practiced. All the other great teachers fell confessedly behind their own standard of virtue ; Christ was more than his doctrine ; his doctrine is but a reflection of his life. His character cannot be explained from any resources of his age ; neither the orthodoxy of the Pharisees,

nor the liberalism of the Sadducees, nor the mysticism of the Essænes could produce it; on the contrary He stands in antagonism to all. He came out from God and taught the world as one who owed nothing to the world, its schools, its libraries, its wise and good men. Though living in the world and for the world, He was not of the world, but far above it as the heaven is above the earth.

Christ's character is uniformly *consistent*. There is no man however wise and good who is not more or less inconsistent, who does not occasionally fall out of his role, yield to the pressure of circumstances, allow himself to be carried away by passion or excitement, betray his native weakness, falter in the path of virtue. But Christ is the same in doctrine and conduct from the beginning to the close, before friend and foe, in private and public life, in action and suffering. He had never to retract a word, never to regret a deed, never to ask the pardon of God or man. His calmness and serenity was never disturbed; He never felt unhappy or desponding, and, when at the close of His ministry, He could say to his heavenly Father in the presence of his intimate friends and disciples: "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

This leads us to the third characteristic of Christ's character, His *sinless perfection*. This is an amazing fact, and nothing less than a moral miracle in the midst of a sinful world. Since the fall of Adam there never has been a human being that was free from the contamination of sin and guilt. Those who are the humblest and know themselves best are most ready to feel and to admit their own imperfections. I need only name Moses, David, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, Luther, and Calvin, who tower so high above ordinary men by the profound conviction of their own imperfections and guilt before God no less than by their genius and piety. Even the noblest among the heathen, as Socrates, Plato, Seneca, Epictetus, Plutarch and Marc Aurelius, prove the same fact.

But Jesus forms one absolute exception to a universal rule. En-

dowed with the keenest moral sensibilities and tenderest sympathies, moving in a corrupt age of this wicked world, and tempted as we, yea more than we are, by unbelief, ingratitude, malignity, denial and treason, He yet maintained a spotless innocence to the last; He never harmed a human being, never failed in word or deed, never fell out of harmony with his Heavenly Father; He was ever true to his mission of mercy, lived solely for the glory of God and the good of mankind; united, in even symmetry, the opposite graces of dignity and humility, strength and gentleness, severity and kindness, energy and resignation, active and passive obedience even to the death on the cross, and furnished an exemplar of perfect humanity for universal imitation.

If this was the character of Jesus—and who will deny it?—how can we in the name of consistency deny his testimony concerning his person and work and refuse to admit his stupendous claims, which from any other mouth would be universally condemned as wicked blasphemy, but which from his lips sound with all the force of self-evident truth. If He was the wisest and holiest of men, He must truly be what He professes to be, the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

THE CHRIST OF PROPHECY.

Though descended from heaven, Christ stands firmly on earth, and as the universal man, "most human, and yet most divine," intertwined with all the fortunes of the race, He casts his lustre back through the long ages of the past to the very beginning of the race, and forward to all ages of the future.

It is an undeniable fact that at the time of Christ the Jewish nation was filled with Messianic expectations, which, though carnally misunderstood and perverted, had their roots in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and bear testimony to them. A long series of prophecies and types runs in unbroken line from the fall of man to the advent of Christ, and looks steadily toward a final

redemption not only of the chosen people but of the whole human family. Though varied in form and admitting of a growing fulfilment, they are yet one and consistent in spirit and aim, and were wonderfully confirmed at last by actual fulfilment. The proto-gospel of the serpent-bruiser, the promises given to Noah, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to David and his royal house, the symbol of the brazen serpent in the wilderness for the healing of the people, the daily sacrifices and the pregnant symbolism of the tabernacle and the temple, the prediction of a future great prophet and lawgiver, the meek and lowly King of Zion, his sufferings for the sins of the people, and his exaltation and everlasting reign, apply, in their highest and deepest sense, to *Jesus of Nazareth*, and to no other person in history. Isaiah, the prince and evangelist among the prophets, in the last twenty-seven chapters of his book, unrolls a picture of the Messiah so complete that none but those blinded by dogmatic prejudice can fail to find here the lineaments of our Saviour with His atoning death and glorious triumph. And finally to make certainty doubly sure, immediately before Christ, appeared his great forerunner (whose historical existence no one denies), as the personal embodiment of the Old Testament, leading his own pupils to Jesus as the Lamb of God, and then disappearing like the dawn of the morning in the glory of the risen sun.

Christ knew and confessed Himself to be the promised Messiah of whom Moses wrote and the prophets; He claimed all the prerogatives and exercised all the functions of the Messiah; He read Himself on every page of the book of God. And, truly, He is the light and the life of the Old Testament; without Him it is a sealed book to this day, in Him it is revealed.

The wonderful harmony between the Christ of prophecy and the Christ of history has at all times justly been regarded as one of the strongest proofs of His divine character and mission and led to the conversion of many thinking and inquiring minds. It is impossible to resolve this harmony into accident or to trace it to human

divination and sagacity. It is the exclusive privilege of the divine mind to foreknow the distant future and to read the end from the beginning.

But the Christ of prophecy and type is not confined to the Jewish religion ; He may be traced, in a modified form, even in the providential currents of the heathen world before his advent on earth. He is the desire of *all* nations. The civilization and literature of Greece, the political power and law of Rome prepared the way for his coming as well as the theocracy of the Jews. The noblest mission of the Greek language was to become the silver basket for the golden apple of the gospel. The chief aim of Alexander's conquests and the consolidation of nations under the Roman rule was to break down the partition walls between nations and to prepare them for a universal religion. The Greek fathers justly recognized in the scattered truths of the ancient poets and philosophers sparks of the light from the Logos before his incarnation. Plato almost prophesied Christ when he described "the righteous man as one who, without doing any injustice, yet has the appearance of the greatest injustice, and proves his own justice by perseverance against all calumny unto death," and when he predicted that, if such a righteous man should ever appear on earth, "he would be scourged, tortured, bound, deprived of his sight, and, after having suffered all possible injury, nailed to a post." Even amidst the blundering symbols, allegories and fictions of heathen mythology, the Avatars and Grand Llamas and Absorptions and Nirvanas of Brahminism and Buddhism, the divine incarnations and the human deifications of Greece and Rome we may see caricatures and carnal anticipations of the great mystery of godliness : "God manifest in the flesh." They are irrepressible longings of the human mind and heart after union with the divine, the groping in the dark after the unknown God who became known in Christ. The prodigal son of idolatry after wasting his substance in riotous living remembered his Father's house and prepared to return to

him in penitence and faith, when the Father met him more than half way and received him to his loving heart. Tertullian speaks with reference to the nobler heathen of the *testimonia animæ naturaliter Christianæ*, of the testimonies of the soul which is constituted and predestinated for Christianity, and which, left to its truest and noblest instincts, turns to the one true God, as the flower to the sun, as the needle to the magnet.

Thus Christ sums up the whole meaning of ancient history, fulfilling the unconscious as well as the conscious prophecies and types of the past, the preparatory revelations of God and the aspirations of the human heart. In the widest sense it is true that He came not to destroy but to fulfil.*

CHRIST AND CHRISTENDOM.

As Christ stands at the end of the old world, so He stands also at the beginning of the new. He is at once the ripest fruit of history before, and the fertile seed of history after, His coming. He is the turning point in the biography of our race, the glory of the past and the hope of the future. Christ and Christianity are inseparable; the achievements of Christianity are the achievements of Christ, its founder and ever present head; and if Christianity cannot perish, it is because Christ lives, the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

For eighteen centuries the Christian Church has stood firm and unshaken, assailed indeed by winds and storms from all directions,

* This is beautifully expressed by Lenau (in his Savonarola) :

*“Die Sehnsucht, die zum Himmel lauschte
Nach dem Erlöser jé und je;
Die aus Prophetenherzen rauschte
In das verlassne Erdenweh;*

*Die Sehnsucht, die so lange Tage
Nach Gotte hier auf Erden ging,
Als Thräne, Lied, Gebet und Klage:
Sie ward Maria und empfing.”*

yet ever growing stronger and spreading wider: a perpetual testimony to Christ, feeding on his words, living of his life, singing his praise in every Zone, commemorating his life-giving death in every communion service, and celebrating His resurrection on every returning Lord's Day. Christianity has taken the lead in all the great movements of modern history: it has regenerated the tottering Roman empire, civilized the Northern barbarians, produced the Reformation of the sixteenth century, abolished cruel laws, mitigated the horrors of war, restrained violence and oppression, infused a spirit of justice and humanity into governments and society, advocated the rights of the poor and suffering, stimulated moral reform and progress, and is the chief author and promoter of all that is good and praiseworthy and enduring in our modern civilization.

Human nature is indeed still as depraved as ever, stained with the same vices, vexed with the same cares, saddened with the same sorrows as in times of old; but, taking even the lowest utilitarian view, we may say with Benjamin Franklin, in his wise letter to Tom Paine, "Man is bad enough with Christianity, he would be far worse without it; therefore do not unchain the tiger." Whatever is bad and deplorable exists *in spite* of Christianity, whatever is pure and holy and tends to promote virtue, happiness and peace, is due chiefly to the direct or indirect influence of Christ and his gospel. And whatever hopes we may and must entertain for the future progress and amelioration of the race, they depend upon Him who alone can bring about by his good and holy Spirit that millennium of peace when

"Earth is changed to Heaven, and Heaven to earth,
One kingdom, joy and union without end."

Yet in the midst of abounding corruptions, Christ continually acts and reacts and fulfills his mission of peace and good will to mankind. Who can measure the restraining, ennobling, cheering, sanctifying impulses which are from day to day and from hour to hour proceeding from the example of Christ, as preached from the pul-

pit, taught in the school, read in the Bible, and illustrated in the lives of his followers. Much as Christians are divided on points of doctrine, polity and ceremonies, they are united in devotion and love to their heavenly Master, derive the same holy motives from Him, and endeavor, however feebly, to attain the same standard of perfection set up by Him.

This unity of Christendom is strikingly illustrated in the vast treasure-house of hymnology whose power for good cannot be easily over-estimated. As I said in another place: "The hymns of Jesus are the Holy of holies in the temple of sacred poetry. From this sanctuary every doubt is banished, here the passions of sense, pride and unholly ambition give way to the tears of penitence, the joys of faith, the emotions of love, the aspirations of hope, the anticipations of heaven; here the dissensions of rival Churches and theological schools are hushed into silence; here the hymnists of ancient, mediaeval, and modern times, from every section of Christendom,—profound divines, stately bishops, humble monks, faithful pastors, devout laymen, holy women—unite with one voice in the common adoration of a common Saviour. He is the theme of all ages, tongues and creeds, the divine harmony of all human discords, the solution of all dark problems of life. What an argument this for the great mystery of God manifest in flesh, and for the communion of saints. Where is the human being however great and good that could open such a stream of grateful song, ever widening and deepening from generation to generation to the ends of the earth?"*

CHRIST AND THE HUMAN HEART.

The experience of the Christian Church for these eighteen hundred years is repeated day by day in every human soul, which is seriously concerned about the question of personal salvation. We are placed by Divine Providence in a world of sin and death; we are made in God's image, endowed with the noblest faculties, destined to

* Preface to "*Christ in Song*," New York, 1868.

be the prophets, priests and kings of nature, filled with unsatisfied longings and aspirations after truth, holiness and peace ; yet bound to this earth, ever drawn away from our own ideals by sensual passions, selfish desires, and surrounded by temptations from within and without. We who are born to the freedom of the sons of God, are slaves of sin ; we who are destined for immortality and glory, must suffer and die ; descended from heaven, we end in the tomb and return to dust.

Who solves this mysterious problem of life ? Who breaks the chains of darkness ? Who removes the load of guilt ? Who delivers us from the degrading slavery of sin ? Who secures peace to our troubled conscience ? Who gives us strength against temptation and enables us to realize our noble vocation ? Who inspires our soul with love to God and man ? Who, in the midst of abounding corruption and depravity, upholds our faith in man, as the image of God and special object of his care ? Who keeps up our hope and courage when earthly prospects vanish, the dearest friends depart, and the future looks dismal and threatening ? Who dispels the terrors of the tomb and bids us hail death as a messenger that summons us to a higher and better world where all the problems of earth are solved in the light and bliss of heaven ?

To all these questions, which may be hushed for a while by the follies of passion, the intoxication of pleasure, the eager pursuit of wealth or knowledge, but which sooner or later irresistibly press themselves upon the attention of every serious mind, there is but one answer : "Lord, where shall we go but to Thee ? Thou alone hast words of eternal life, and we know and believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Apostles and evangelists, martyrs and confessors, fathers and reformers, profound scholars, and ignorant slaves, mighty rulers and humble subjects, experienced men and innocent children—all, all point, in this great and all-absorbing question of salvation, not to Moses, not to Socrates, not to Muhammed, not to philosophy, art, or science, but to Christ, as the

Way, the Truth, and the Life. He and He alone has a balm for every wound, a relief for every sorrow, a solution for every doubt, pardon for every sin, strength for every trial, victory for every conflict. He and He alone can satisfy the infinite desires of our immortal mind. Out of Christ life is an impenetrable mystery ; in Him it is gloriously solved. Out of Him there is nothing but skepticism, nihilism and despair ; in Him there is certainty and peace in this world, and life everlasting in the world to come. Our hearts are made for Christ, and “they are without rest until they rest in Christ.”

“In joy of universal peace, or sense
 Of sorrow over sin,
Christ is His own best evidence,
 His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
 Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
 Of the oblivious years,—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
 A present help is He ;
And faith has still its Olivet,
 And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
 Is by our beds of pain ;
We touch Him in life’s throng and press,
 And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said.
 Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
 Are burdened with His name.

O Lord and Master of us all !
 Whate’er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
 We test our lives by Thine.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,
All labor vainly done;
The solemn shadow of Thy cross
Is better than the sun.

Alone, O love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from Thee is hell,
To walk with Thee is heaven.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may Thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee.

The heart must ring the Christmas bells,
Thy inward altars raise,
Its faith and hope Thy canticles,
And its obedience praise.”*

* From Whittier's “Our Master,” the finest Christian ode produced in America.

THE

SELF-WITNESSING CHARACTER

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY.

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THE
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OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY.

AMID the collisions of religious opinions, the strifes of sects and schools, it is a good thing for plain and honest people, who desire the benefit of a “settled mind” in the knowledge of the truth, to go back, occasionally, to the fresh survey of first principles ; to examine anew the significance of those primary facts that formed, of old, the groundwork of faith, so that we may apprehend them in the light wherein they appeared originally to the first teachers and the first disciples of the Christianity of the New Testament, as a Revelation not only divine but self-witnessing.

Regarded as a mental exercise, such a survey will be found, no doubt, healthful and invigorating ; “profitable,” also “for correction,” as well as “instruction in righteousness,” thus bringing one into quick sympathy with those witnesses of the first century, who knew whereof they affirmed, and were ever “ready to give a reason for the hope” that was in them, as believers in a self-witnessing Religion.

That was, in fact, a grand distinction of the Christianity that

they received, loved, and lived out in action. It is of that primitive Christianity that we affirm, to-day, the same self-witnessing character that was recognized at the beginning.

Not without reason are we careful thus to define the subject of our thought and our discourse; for some of the acutest thinkers and strongest writers of the past, as well as of the present, have incurred the grave mistake of confounding with the Religion of Jesus, under the name of Historical Christianity, ideas and beliefs, scholastical and ecclesiastical systems, or usages, which the first generation of Christians would have repelled with loathing and abhorrence.

Hence the aptness and significance of a critical remark of Dean Milman, in his preface to Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, opposing to all of the great Historian's subtle attacks upon Christianity the one short, adequate answer, that he did not derive his ideas of Christianity from a pure source; "his art consisting in his confounding in one undistinguishable mass, the *origin* and *Apostolic* propagation of the new religion, with its *later* progress: his plan enabling him to commence his account, in most parts, *below the Apostolic times*; and it was only by the strength of the dark coloring with which he brought out the failings and the follies of the succeeding ages, that a shadow of doubt and suspicion was thrown back upon the primitive period of Christianity." Even so; it is only spurious Christianity that his shafts hit. Upon that his keen-edged satire often leaves its mark. For that we set up no defence; but, on the other hand, would carefully distinguish it from the Christianity of Jesus, just as Jesus Himself distinguished the traditional, effete Judaism of His own times from the simple religion taught by Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets.

How clearly and mightily He did this, you know. With what inspiring energy He lifted up His voice in the presence of Priests, Rabbis and Lawyers, as well as of the popular masses, sending

them back to first truths, sounding out His appeals in behalf of the Old Testament, from Moses to Malachi, as the Revelation to the people of a self-witnessing Religion which the State-schools of the age had perverted, darkened, and “made void” by their traditional teaching.

Just so we, in our day and generation, walking in the steps of our Divine Teacher and in the light of His example, would sound forth in the ears of the people our appeal in behalf of Christianity as a self-witnessing Religion ; not, indeed, of a Christianity overlaid with the scholastic doctrines of semi-barbaric ages, nor of a Christianity mutilated and reduced by the manipulations of Philosophy to a few abstract axioms that no one but an idiot would deny, but rather of that New Testament Christianity, which is grounded at once upon broad principles that command the assent of Reason, and upon plain facts that are vocal with fresh teachings from God.

In order to do this by the plainest and shortest method at our command, we must seek the stand-point that may furnish the most direct view of the object of our pursuit, disclose it in its original simplicity, and enable us, like the first witnesses, to see it shining by its own light.

To this end we would, just now, avail ourselves of that carefully condensed statement of Christianity which was set forth by a special Divine direction, as its Author declared, for the purpose of meeting the needs of a company of heathen-born inquirers as to what the New Testament Revelation really was, and what its claims upon their personal acceptance.

From the only genuine and authentic Christian history of the second thirty years of the first century, we take the first recorded statement that was ever offered by a Christian Apostle, as an explanation of Christianity, to an audience of inquirers outside of the pale of Judaism. (Acts of the Apostles x. 34—43).

For the discharge of this high trust he was specially instructed

and commissioned ; and so, of course, the occasion was invested with a real historical dignity.

Now, in order that we may clearly discern the facts in their historical relations, apprehend their meaning and determine their origin, let us proceed to consider,

I. The significance of the Occasion.

II. The self-witnessing character of the Testimony.

First of all, then, let it be noted, the Occasion that gave special significance to the Apostle Peter's mission to Cæsarea, the Roman Capital of Palestine, was an unexpected call to explain the Christian Religion to a gathering of Romans who were avowed inquirers after the truth, seeking an answer to the question, What is Christianity ?

The Jew-born Apostle hesitated as to a free compliance with the summons, at first, because he had, under the sway of his nation's training, repelled the suggestion to admit converts from Heathenism *directly* into the Messianic Church, having always believed that Heathens, of every grade, must become proselytes of Judaism before they could pass lawfully within the gates of the Messiah's Kingdom. On this account he refrained from eating with any who were heathen-born unless they had been formally initiated into the Jewish Church according to the Mosaic Law.

A voice that was recognized as a voice of divine authority corrected the Apostle's view, directed him to receive the embassy from Cæsarea, and to go thither that he might communicate to a company of Roman inquirers the distinguishing truths of the Religion that he had been commissioned to teach.

Thus, "led by a way that he had not known," the Apostle was brought at once into communication with a man of eminent position, a centurion commanding "The Italian Band," one of the old family of the Cornelii, long noted in Roman History. He was "a devout man," habituated to prayer and almsgiving, a seeker after Truth, and so far, to apply to him an expression of Jesus, "a child of Light."

He was not a Jewish Proselyte ; for, had he been so, Peter would not have questioned the propriety of eating with him. Nor was he, at this time, an idol-worshiper ; he was not in communion with the religion of his own country. He had risen above it ; had reached a higher plane of thought than it could offer. In relation to him, it was inadequate, an utter failure, incapable of meeting the needs of his spiritual nature. It was, indeed, a beautiful mythology, a splendid ritualism æsthetically constructed, an august Priesthood, invested with the most touching associations that poetical genius could create ; but despite all this, it could never realize, for him, the aims and ends of a Religion.

Why not ? Because it lacked the evidence of a superhuman, or a divine origin ; it rested upon no solid groundwork of plain facts that were vocal with appeals to the intellect, the conscience, or the heart ; it was not, in any sense, a Revelation from a higher source, but stood forth its own witness of having sprung from man, a merely natural development of "what was in man," the true expression of his "vain imagination," his lawless passions, or superstitious fears ; and so, instead of lifting the soul above itself heavenward, dragged it earthward, binding it fast in chains of sensual slavery, without one sign of a redemptive power for the present or the future. And yet this noble man, of an earnest, inquiring spirit, though dissatisfied or disgusted with the effete Formalisms of Heathendom, had found no satisfactory substitute.

In Palestine, however, a clearer light had shone ; the Mosaic Revelation had appealed effectually to his higher nature, so that he had become a worshiper of the one living God. But now his soul's cry was for still clearer light and progressive teaching ; for, like many others at that period, dispersed abroad throughout Heathendom, he was waiting for the realization of hopes that inspired prophecy had been kindling for centuries into a livelier glow, desiring and "looking for" the Revelation of a promised Messiah "in the fullness of time."

Such was the man who stands forth here upon an eminence of History, recognized, by name, as the first trophy of the Messianic Religion won from the Gentile world. Such was the man whose house was the cradle of that Gentile Christian Church which has been gradually extending its area over the Continents, is still progressive, and is, to-day, the chief spring of those moral influences that are reconstructing nations and guiding the course of History. He passes in review before us as the first-named inquirer of the first century that emerged from the heathen masses of the Roman Empire, using the light of Reason in the pursuit of religious truth, and discerning in the Christianity of the New Testament a self-witnessing Religion, revealing God to man, and, (as the Word imports) "binding back" the affections of erring man to the source and centre of his being.

II. With this view of the historical occasion that called forth the first recorded appeal of Christianity to the Gentile mind, we are prepared to apprehend the sense and scope of its four leading propositions, explanatory of that New Testament Religion which has gone forth, from this starting-point, with self-witnessing power.

(1.) This introductory announcement of the Messianic Religion to a Roman Assembly sets forth, first of all, a new idea of the permanent relations that all men sustain to God, and to each other, by a bold affirmation of the Messiah's two-fold Doctrine: (a) that all the Races of mankind occupy, in relation to God, one broad level of moral equality; and hence, (b) that in the divine Kingdom the recognized standard of estimation is, not any outward condition of birth, blood, or lineage, but simply PERSONAL CHARACTER. It was an announcement of vast scope, of world-wide effect: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

Familiar as this comprehensive idea may be to our thought, to-day, it was, in that age, new, revolutionizing and reconstructive.

Throughout the whole realm of Judaism, outside of the discipleship of Jesus, throughout the whole range of schools, courts, and synagogues, there was not a man of influential position, not a priest, or rabbi, or public teacher of any order, who apprehended it; not one who would not have scouted it as a chimera or hated it as a heresy.

In regard to this initial doctrine of Christ, moreover, the leading minds of the Gentile world cherished a pride of Race that generated an antipathy as strong as that of the Jewish Traditionists. The most cultivated nations had not gained one step of advancement in this direction. The Greek culture had held for ages the leadership of civilization; and a fundamental idea of that culture took form from the school of Aristotle, who taught that the inferior races were created to subserve the pleasure of the stronger, and that perpetual slavery, therefore, was in harmony with the order of the Universe.*

In Religion and Philosophy, the Greek thought shaped the Roman; and so, throughout the whole Roman Empire the divisions and antagonisms of Race were almost as deeply grounded as those of the terrible caste-power that covered the broad area of Buddhism among the older nations of Central and Eastern Asia. Nowhere, in any live institution or system, could be traced a conception of one living, world-wide Humanity recognizing in one living God a common Fatherhood, or in the kindreds of men a brotherhood, made one in the equality of a common nature.

There is now before us here a fact of positive significance.

Just at the time when the various religions of mankind had developed their character as local, warring Formalisms inherited from a dead Past, nourishing deadly antipathies of caste and clanship, a voice is heard in the Roman Capital of Palestine answering a

* See Neander's note, and quotation from Aristotle's Work on Politics, (I. 1, c. 2.) Torrey's Translation of Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church, p. 46.

heart-cry for the knowledge of some better way by the annunciation of a grand and sublime Idea, signalizing the advent of a new era. That Idea, meeting a universal need, sounds the depths of the human soul, reveals new possibilities, awakens a dormant consciousness of capacity for progress, brings every man into a relationship with man that harmonizes with the laws of Reason, the moral order of the universe; and thus, becomes at once, to the individual and to society, a real reforming power that "makes all things new" in the present, while it recasts the programme of the World's Future.

Who is it that speaks? Who is it that puts into a sentence the truth that explains the moral failures of the Past, anticipates "the ages to come," and sounds the key-note of a progressive Epoch? Is it a Rabbi from Jerusalem? A philosopher from Athens? An orator from Rome? No; think of it; the noble company at Cæsarea are listening to a lake-fisherman from Galilee; a poor Jew who had lately seemed incapable of apprehending the doctrine that he was now revealing and had been educated into an abhorrence of the people that he was now hailing as his own spiritual kin forevermore.

To-day, after the lapse of more than eighteen centuries, no one of us, however highly gifted with insight, can fully estimate and interpret this marvellous fact, so vocal with profound meaning, without an effort of attention. Let us draw near, come face to face with this strange spectacle, the inquiring Romans, the Jew teacher.

To the erudite scholar, the Priest or Rabbi, to an Ananias or a Gamaliel, the recorded saying here before us was not only distasteful but an outrage. In that day, a "Son of Abraham," publicly teaching that the Messianic Era, inaugurated by Jesus of Nazareth, had abolished all religious caste, that the new kingdom of God upon earth recognized no distinction founded upon birth or position, or color, or nationality, upon "circumcision or uncircumcision," upon any birthright privilege whatsoever, that a Roman soldier or

an African slave, by receiving Christ with a loving faith became an heir of all the promised immunities as really as if he had knelt from his youth at the altars of Israel, uttered a kind of blasphemy for which excommunication and death were the condign penalties.

What a heresy it was ! One God, One Messiah, One Humanity ! the whole Race occupying one broad level of moral equality, with no recognized distinction in the sight of Heaven but that of personal character ! character, not condition or rank, God's standard of estimation ! And yet this initial Idea of the new Era, so intensely hated, so simple that a child's mind can apprehend it when once stated, shining by its own light, touched and roused at once the popular heart, the common conscience, the universal reason and judgment of mankind, so as to win conviction, to revolutionize opinion, to uplift and reconstruct individual and social character throughout every rank and class of men and women, from the highest to the lowest, from the centre of the metropolis to the lone hut of the wilderness.

Just there, in that initial doctrine, lay enfolded a main element of the power that the New Testament Christianity exerted over the masses of the people. The effect was immediate. Even the Christian slaves commanded the respect of their masters and were "looked up to" as specimens of exalted character. If the Christians of "Nero's household" were Nero's servants, they pitied, no doubt, their imperial Master when they thought how poor he was ; amid all the signs of grandeur in Nero's palace they could look down with sorrow upon his enslavement and pray for the Emperor's emancipation.

And so onward from that day to the present, this Messianic Idea has developed itself in history as the chief reforming power upon the face of the earth. It is the mightest agitator of the world just now. It is recasting the public sentiment of nations ; in a modified form it shines in the preamble of the People's charter, our Declaration of Independence, as the primary, fundamental

Idea upon which a true Christian nationality must be based. Upon this enduring Rock American nationality now rests and "the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." This broad Christian principle, in a form adjusted to political relations, set from the beginning as the corner-stone of our Republic, is the one grand distinction which the Religion of the Divine Messiah has conferred upon us as a people, enfolding the guarantee of our national immortality.

But here the question meets us. How was it that this Galilean fisherman, who had so lately left his boats and nets, arose so quickly to this eminence as the Teacher and Prophet of the ages, inculcating in a few words the *one principle* that, despite the mightiest antagonisms, has been the life-power of the world's progress during the eighteen intervening centuries, and is recognized at once as the living force of the Present, the Hope of the Future?

In putting the answer to such a question in plain words I am reminded of the quaint saying of M. Prudhon in his *brochure* touching the Sabbath-law of Moses regarded as the solution of a great physico-social problem in harmony with the protracted and most careful inductions of Science, that sooner than believe chance alone had so favored the forecasting of Moses he would believe that some special revelation had been made to him: or else accept the fable that "a sow wrote the Iliad with its snout." Just so may we say touching the case before us; sooner than believe that this poor unlettered Galilean had thrown all the finest intellects of the Race into the shade by the merely normal development of his own nature, I must believe that a special Revelation had been made to him; or else accept even the tales of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments as the true exponents of natural Law or the methods of nature's working.

(2). After the proclamation of this Messianic doctrine the moral equality of all men in their natural relation to God, this first exposition of the New Testament Christianity advances to the direct

proof of the divine Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, by setting forth the actual UNION, in His Person, of perfect Goodness and supernatural Power.

This proof is put in the form of FACTS that were vocal with testimony and appeal. It is a brief rehearsal :

“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (He is Lord of all,) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached : how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power ; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with Him.”

Here it is to be observed, that this original statement of positive evidence, on behalf of the divine Messiahship of Jesus, does not ground His claims to our acceptance solely upon the supernatural works that He set forth as credentials of His Mission ; at the same time, it is worthy of special notice, in view of the positions taken by modern Naturalists or Free Religionists, that this Exposition does not ground the claims of Christianity to our acceptance simply upon the exceptional excellence or moral perfection of Christ’s character. It does not ignore nor disparage the one or the other kind of evidence, neither the external nor the internal, but recognizes at once the divine voice uttered through the sense-world as well as the spirit-world, God Himself directly ruling both, and subordinating both to His own designs. Both these sources of proof are set together here, not arbitrarily, but necessarily ; conjoined like the two rocky bases of a grand arch, neither of which can be removed without peril to the whole structure. “What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.”

Nevertheless, the Naturalists, or Liberalists, of our time, (a minority of the leaders, however, with commendable frankness, let it be said, repudiating their long contested claim to the designation of “Christians,”) have joined hands in the work of destroying this

unity ; breaking the arch asunder ; or rather, we may say, taking away the foundation upon which one of its sides has stood so firmly through the centuries.

For, by means of the Pulpit, as well as the Press, the Sunday-Sermon as well as the printed Essay, they tell us in forms of expression skillfully adjusted to the highest and lowest range of intellect, that the mere conception of a miracle pertains to the childhood of the race ; that the laws of nature being immutable, a real miracle is impossible ; that, even if it were possible, any display of power within the range of the material, the phenomenal world, proposed as evidence of a moral proposition or a religious doctrine, is "an impertinence ;" that Science has exploded all pretensions of this kind ; and that it is an affront to human reason to demand the assent of a free mind to any affirmation whatsoever on the ground of an authority attested by an external work of supernatural power.

When we commend to the acceptance of these men, of the "Free Thought School," Naturalistic, or Rationalistic, Positive, or Transcendental, testimonies touching an order of supernatural facts demonstrative of a special, divine authority pertaining either to Christ Himself or to His Apostles, they urge in answer such questions as these : How can the manifestation of superhuman power within the sphere of material phenomena, the external world, decide my soul's questions that relate to what is not phenomenal ? Is not the attempt to command my assent by such signs of power equivalent to a coercion of my will, a restriction of my freedom and moral responsibility ? If I, by my own natural intuition, or "the light within," can recognize the moral excellence of Christ's character, as well as a superior degree of truthfulness in His sayings, of what use can a miracle be to me ? If the evidence of a testimony be complete in itself, where is the need of a miracle ? If it be not complete in itself, how can a miracle supply the deficiency ? Is it not, altogether, from every point of view, needless, superfluous, worthless ?

Moreover, as all our personal knowledge of the laws or methods of nature shows their universality and immutability, would not the supply of such a human need as a supernatural work implies, however intensely felt, be an impossibility? Is it not clear, therefore, that in stating anew the evidences of Christianity, miracles must be counted out?

We answer, No: They cannot be counted out, unless we ignore or shirk the main point of the question touching the reality of a Revelation from God to man. For, when you or I ask in real earnestness, the question, Is there now, or has there ever been known on earth, a special Revelation from God, supplementary to the teachings of Reason, we do not mean merely the God of the spirit-world that is separated from us by a barrier of sense which we cannot break through, but we mean the God whose dominion comprehends both, the sense-world *and* the spirit-world alike; the one universal God; the God of Nature; the God who rules the realm of matter as well as the realm of mind, the One source of being, the One Almighty Creator whom weak Humanity, conscious of absolute dependence, invokes by prayer as natural as "the raven's cry."

The first conception of God that Nature awakens in the inquisitive mind of man is called forth by the manifestations of regulated Power. With this idea the successive changes of the material universe are vocal. But the soul's great question is, Has this Supreme Mind, this all-working Power ever spoken a word of loving *Fatherhood* to me, and caused this same sense-world that confronts me with its terrible, crushing array of Law and Order to put forth its own voice as a Witness for Him, responsive to His Will?

Now if we would apprehend the true significance of this first great question of the soul, of the real *need* that prompts it, and the kind of answer that is necessary to meet that need, we must remember that, long before the advent of Jesus, the leading Idea

that shaped the theology and ruled in the life of the oriental nations was the direct antagonism between Nature and God. The material world was regarded as being entirely outside of the dominion or jurisdiction of the Divine Intelligence. Throughout the vast masses of that old world, in the religion of the majority, the dominating Idea was that the power of the Good Spirit, the One Supreme Mind, was confined to the spirit-world, and that an inferior Being, Evil and Malign, was the Former and Ruler of the sense-world. The evil to which man is heir lay enfolded in the connection of his spirit with the body and its material surroundings ; and all deliverance, or redemptive power, was to be sought in the voluntary withdrawal of the spirit from matter, thus to be prepared for a return to the higher spirit-life.

From this prevailing idea sprang the ancient hermit-life of India and Egypt, the old Buddhistic codes for the maceration and starvation of the body in order to redeem the spirit from its power ; all the degrading, revolting forms of religious Asceticism from ages preceding the existence of Hebrew nationality down to the mean and miserable life of the Indian Fakir, or of the Italian Mendicant Monk of our own time. This old Buddhistic doctrine of India was the parent of what was called Sofism, (or Wisdom), in Persia ; and, as Isaac Taylor expresses it, "the Grand-parent" of what the Greeks called Gnosticism, (from the Greek word $\gammaνώστις$, knowledge, or science), which, extending gradually westward, infected even Judaism itself after its seventy years of domestication in Babylonia and its ever-growing intercourse with the old oriental peoples. This one idea, the vital element and *virus* of the ancient Gnosticism, was destined to become, for successive centuries, the chief opponent and corrupter of the religion of the Messiah, having already diffused its subtle leaven among the leading minds of his own nation through what was called "the Mystic Cabala," long before the Song of the angels announced His birth to the shep-

herds of Bethlehem, or the Star in the East had guided thither the Magians of Persia.

Let us not overlook or underestimate the historical significance of the fact before us. Those ancient Gnostics whose teachings were designated by Paul in his first Epistle to Timothy, "Oppositions of Science, falsely so called," (1Tim. vi. 20), did not regard the material universe as an *instrumentality* that the Supreme Spirit uses, or is able to use, for the manifestation of Himself, but as a vast realm *beyond His range* of action, and so far separated from Him by contrariety of nature that the subjection of it to His direct rule is a self-evident impossibility. In the form as well as in the fundamental ideas of the religion that shaped the thinking of the majority of mankind at the era of Christ's Advent, what a deep abysmal gulf separated man, as a creature of flesh and blood, from the domain of his Creator!

In the view of the Gnostic, (that is the Knower, seeing truth intuitively), the combination of spirit with matter in the human form, the actual constitution of our manhood, was a work of wanton, rebellious evil, an achievement of enormous deviltry at the very beginning.

How could this ancient widening, deepening gulf be bridged? How could this primary need of the Race be met, so as to reenthrone the One God over the one universe, and bring back man, as man, composed of flesh and spirit, into the relation of Sonship, looking heavenward with filial feeling, with the loving cry, *Abba, Father?*

How, we ask, could this urgent exigency be met, this heart-cry of Humanity be answered, except by some clear demonstration, cognizable at once by Sense and Spirit, that the Supreme Spirit is the loving Father, the Eternal, Almighty, unrestricted Sovereign of all worlds, the material and the spiritual alike? Just then, at that epoch of human history, this particular demonstration was the world's

chief want; and just that demonstration, God's Wisdom, Love and Power were united in setting forth by the miracles of Jesus.

And so, when He stood upon the earth in human form, the perfect Image of the Father, He declared that the God of NATURE spake to us through Him; that He was supreme over all worlds and spheres equally; and then, at His bidding, Nature answered in confirmation of His Testimony; Nature's force, wielded by Will, obeyed His voice; Nature's "Method" modified itself at His command; changes of the primeval order appeared immediately at His call, traceable instantaneously, as effects, to His simple Will-power breaking through the old established chain of antecedents that men have called Laws, (but which Auguste Comte preferred to call "Methods,") and thus evolved the far-reaching, glorious truth that the forces of Nature are ruled by a loving Father's energy.

The witnessing soul, interpreting a new order of events, at once recognized the unity of the Father and the Son, the harmony of Sense and Spirit, responding joyfully, "The Mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken." The speculations of old Theosophy that were spreading from East to West like a malarious, deadening mist, were met by a new life emanating from living facts, living words, and a living character divinely revealed, shining by their own light, and calling forth into glad activity the slumbering souls of millions long sepulchred in the effete religionisms of the Past, attesting their own conscious regeneration, and saying, Now we live! "This is eternal life, to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." The facts were self-witnessing, signalizing a new era, a new life-power from on high. The relation of this interposing will-force to the established order of nature Jesus Himself beautifully illustrated by His parable, or word-picture, exhibiting the woman in the household who, by a simple act of *volition*, casts into the "three measures" of meal before her the quickening leaven that comes "according to a fixed law," into gradual contact with every

atom of that material mass and thus inaugurates a new era of its history.

And now, must the world-wide significance of the new order of testimonies that were projected by a Mighty hand upon the area of human history and actually inaugurated the Christian Era, be made of no account to us by the modern *Savant*, the Transcendental or Positive Knower of the time, the Gnostic of the nineteenth century, who, standing forth in the name of Science, as a commissioned exponent of the latest Knowledge, confronts the whole array of concordant evidences by the grand assumption that Nature's Laws, or methods of development, are above and beyond the scope of any direct action by the Will of any mind-power in the universe, even that of the Supreme God, because those Laws or Methods, being immutable, a miracle, that is the direct action of the Divine Will upon the Material order, is an impossibility? Just this one broad affirmation distinguishes, to-day, the Theological School of Scientific Naturalism, which peremptorily demands that we treat this affirmation as an axiom, and so accept its doctrine that though God, the omniscient Spirit, can communicate truth directly to our spirits as far as our natural intuitions go, though He can inspire every human soul, can endow genius with insight, can develop new seers, thinkers, or Messiahs, for the guidance of the great world of mind, yet He never has possessed the power to touch or reach the sense-world so as to render *that* vocal with testimonies, has never been able to make the material universe subservient to the communication of any higher spiritual truth however needful, good, or sublime may be its aim and end.

So spake the old Gnostic of the East; so speaks the modern *Savant*: the Knower of the West. The oriental Gnostic assumed the existence of two rival, ruling Powers, Good and Evil, with forces nearly balanced: the modern, occidental Gnostic, engrossed with the observation of material phenomenon and their relations, discovering in the correlation of all forces an ultimate unity, is zealously aver-

ring that there is nothing in the universe but one blind force, blindly developing itself in progressive forms; so, that even Jesus Himself appears upon the arena of history but as a regular Darwinian development from the lowest order of animals, through the Molluscan, and the Simian, into the imperial order of Humanity.

In affirmations like these the Theological Naturalistic School of our day assumes the tone of high authority, like that which well becomes the mathematician, who has demonstrated necessary truth; and yet, whensoever this school has been called upon to show the connecting links of the series in this process of transmutation or evolution, it has sadly confessed its failure to produce that kind of direct evidence which characterizes Science.

When Spinoza, the learned Jew of Amsterdam, the European expounder and systematizer of Pantheism, uttered the declaration, "If I could persuade myself, that Jesus of Nazareth wrought one miracle, that He raised the dead, for instance, I would dash my system to pieces and at once accept the belief of common Christians," he spake as a consistent reasoner, a rigid Logician. He apprehended the significance of a real Miracle—that which exceeds the sum of all natural forces—and saw that, in relation to the claims of Christianity, he could not ignore the testimony or resist the moral appeal of such a fact.

But why should any one of us, seeking truth, amid the lights of the nineteenth century, treat as doubtful or unsettled the old question whether or not Jesus wrought "one miracle," or more than one? It is a question of Fact; and in the determination of it, let us remember, He stands out Himself upon the foreground of history, in His character as a Man and Teacher, the greatest of all Miracles. That character, which the poor fishermen of the Galilean lake never could have originated, and which, so far from being their creation, re-created them, looms up over the broad Past as the one grand fact that has been shaping the fortunes of Humanity. In the presence of that one dominant fact an anterior presumption against the

credibility of any one miracle dwindles into nothingness. The mighty work, vocal with God's love, is no longer an incongruity, but a harmony with the fitness of things; the supernatural work tallying with the superhuman character.

Surely, the lights of this century's science, streaming from various sources, the teachings of analogy as well as deductions from fundamental truths, converge toward the verification of the Messianic Miracles; for everywhere we see the mysterious, unknowable life-power subordinating to its own ends the elements of inorganic nature, and hear still from the most advanced scientists of every school the old confession, that this life-power is, to-day, as ever a secret before whose shrine science bows in humiliation, unable to approach its hidden source. Why, then, "should it be thought a thing incredible," that He of whom the most unimpressible class of men exclaimed, "Never man spake like this man," whose individuality appeared to all so wonderfully exceptional, should possess IN HIMSELF the secret of this creative force, and wield it for the fulfillment of His mission, the inauguration of a new moral epoch, the uplifting of our fallen Humanity to a reunion with "the Father of spirits," whom to know "is life eternal?"

What is, indeed, the chief, dominant idea of the most advanced Science, just now, but that of Progress through successive epochs, each of them inaugurated by the manifestation of a living Power whose source Nature does not disclose?

In the first century, the proclamation of a kindred idea by the fishermen of Galilee, the supremacy of power over nature and the perfection of goodness, united in the Person of the Messiah, as "Lord of all," while it met the deepest need and answered the heart-cry of an orphaned race, went forth like the primal light over chaos, its own witness to the millions.

(3). By the light of this authentic exposition let us now advance another step in this study of the primary truths, those related ideas that distinguished the New Testament Christianity.

For the Apostle having set forth the mission of Jesus as the Messiah of Universal Humanity, having shown that the union of Supreme Power and perfect Goodness was incarnated in Him, proceeds further to show that, although his audience had already heard "the published word" in regard to Him as "the crucified," He had been revealed anew, in accordance with ancient prophecies, as the one Messiah EVER LIVING, raised from the state of the dead to a state of supreme enthronement, and recognized as the "Heir" of a universal dominion.

Hence it is evident, that this first teaching of Christianity did not exhibit merely a *dead Christ*, attractive only by the moral loveliness of His character, or the beauty of His example, or the charm of His doctrine, but also, a living Personality, a conscious spirit reunited to material form; an ever-present, acting Power *in the world*, subordinating all the forces of nature and humanity to the realization of His own designs.

Let us recur to the original statement of this view:

"And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged upon a tree: Him God raised up and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even unto us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is He who was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Brief and condensed as this statement is, its significance is far-reaching.

This relation to the Race, of a universal Messiah who had passed through the state of the dead to an enthronement "on high," or in the heavenly state, is an Idea sharply antagonistic to that old oriental doctrine of essential evil necessarily inherent in material nature, whereof we have spoken. Against this deadly error the fact of the Resurrection was set in direct antagonism. It revealed the Mesiah as living forever in a glorified body, a material form,

ethereal, incorruptible, and indestructible ; living forever as sinless spirit in harmony with nature, wielding material forces in subordination to spiritual ends, and so making matter and spirit ONE in the ministries of Divine wisdom and love.

Moreover, this Christian Idea was a positive contradiction of that philosophical Pantheism that underlay and shaped the Pagan Religionisms of Asia, affirming the constant absorption of human souls into the original, impersonal Deity, the infinite sea of being into which conscious individualities subside, like bubbles upon the bil lowy deep. This old Pantheistic conception had for ages benumbed the oriental mind, rendered it incapable of progress, or of aspiration toward it, and chilled whole nations into an arctic torpidity. "The stagnant East" is the most familiar and fitting phrase to express the thought of Christendom in view of the dull monotony and deadness of the Pantheistic peoples.

Some physicists speak of this condition as simply climatic ; but then we know that moral causes have transformed character in all climates. The oriental Idea is destructive, the world over, to that culture and expansion of the individual mind that insure progressive power.

An effective antagonistic force, adapted to revolutionize and uplift this vast hemisphere of deadened mind, was enfolded in the startling testimony of the Messiah's Resurrection from the state of the dead, His inauguration of a new moral Empire, His exaltation as the Head of a new Race of redeemed, living, loving souls, united to Him, individually, in bonds of personal sympathy, forever progressive in knowledge and happiness, forever conscious of a joyous, individual life.

To every listener, Jew or Gentile, civilized or barbarian, it was a heart-stirring Revelation of facts vocal with doctrines that solved the profoundest problems, met the deepest needs, and verified the instinctive longings of every human soul that was conscious, however dimly, of capabilities for which the world opened no scope, of

aspirations that if knew not how to realize, and at the same time of dispositions to evil at war with its own ideal standard of the everlasting Right.

Who can wonder that a revelation like this, of attested Facts against old myths, of living principles against effete traditions, of living thoughts in burning words that searched men's hearts like Divine lights kindled anew within, should arouse slumbering nations and go forth among the millions as a revolutionizing and redemptive power?

It is the great marvel of History; but the assigned cause was adequate.

Yet amidst and around us we hear the voices of the Free-Thought School, or as it is sometimes called, the Liberal Christian School, affirming and repeating the dogma, that as natural Law is immutable, or rather, as there is not in the universe a mind-power or a spirit-will that can modify nature's methods, a miracle is impossible and the resurrection of Christ is, therefore, a mere seeming.

Nevertheless, we may here incidentally observe, despite their ignoring of fundamental facts, and "falling back on Nature," as they say, they designate their teaching as Progressive Christianity; and they accuse the whole body of Evangelical Christians with the sin of an anti-christian illiberalism, because we do not courteously concede to every claimant a rightful share in the appropriation of the Christian name.

But our answer to this charge is, that we follow the golden rule, "Do as you would be done by." We are no more illiberal in regard to them than to ourselves.

We freely say with Paul, "If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain." We have no Messiah, no Saviour, no Divine Master to follow, nothing to preach in any name given under heaven. We cannot glory in the Cross of Calvary, in the ignominious death of Jesus, after having been condemned, "according to law," as a blas-

phemer, if, indeed, His character, as God's Messiah, was not vindicated by the predicted issue.

Shall we be justly deemed illiberal because we say to another who calls himself *liberal*, the ground upon which you profess to stand would not bear our weight? When it sinks as quicksand beneath our feet, are we "illiberal" because we would not call it granite, contrary to our experience of reality? We find no rocky footing there; like Peter, attempting to walk upon the waves of Gennesaret, we gravitate to the abyss, craving help, but not knowing *whom* to call upon.

But now, to all around us, near and afar off, the leaders and "the led" of this advancing age, we repeat, and put anew the old question of the first century, in the very words of the appeal that resounded throughout the Roman court at Cæsarea, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

Why? If Natural Science has uttered its last word, as Auguste Comte affirms, in the recognition of "the invariableness of phenomena under similar conditions as the sum total of human investigation," so that CAUSES are unknowable, (although we see intuitively that beyond phenomena, or mere appearances, there *must* be a cause,)—if it be true, as Mr. Huxley says, every attempt to account for the origin of animal life, on scientific principles, "has failed in its crucial test, the ability to produce animal life,"—if it be true, as Mr. Charles Darwin has lately said, "How life first originated is a hopeless inquiry,"—if it be true, as Prof. Tyndale has acknowledged, "The problem of the connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in the pre-scientific ages," or if it be true, as Geology shows, that there were periods when upon the surface of this planet no vital organism could exist, so that the new epochs of life must have been *inaugurated* by interventions of a Power that Nature has not disclosed to the eye of any investigator, why should it be thought a thing incredible, that

the grandest epoch of the moral world, enfolding the infinite future of the highest race that has appeared upon this orb, should have been inaugurated by a *fresh demonstration* of creative, or re-creative power, put forth in the history of that race's representative, the Kingly Person of God's Son, our Messiah, the Song of Prophecy, the Desire of Nations, the Hope of Humanity?

Shall I close my eyes and ears against all the lights and voices that break forth from manifold analogies throughout the heights or depths of Nature and the broad area of human History, leading me gently upward through the low domain of Sense to the higher realm of Spirit-life, and a conscious sympathy with the Father of Spirits? I cannot do so, without a violation of the highest and profoundest laws of my moral constitution and my spiritual being.

(4). Having set forth the true relation of all the races of men to the one God and the one Messiah, the incarnation of supreme Power and Goodness in that Messiah's personality, His continued life in the higher world as the exalted Head of a spiritual kingdom, in this world, advancing to a glorious consummation, this initiatory statement of the New Testament Christianity advances now to the declaration of His ABSOLVING POWER, in its relation to every individual soul of our fallen race ; thus expressed :

“ To Him give all the Prophets witness that, through His Name, all who believe on Him shall receive remission of sins.”

Underlying this broad statement of Christ's absolving power is the idea so familiar to the first Christians, of the priestly office of the Messiah in union with the kingly ; an idea which this same Apostle speaks of as fundamental, known to all, when he sets it forth, in his first Epistle written twenty-seven years after his visit to Caesarea, as an acknowledged redemptive power, pertaining to the one priestly offering of the Messiah Himself for us, “as of a Lamb without spot or blemish,” (1st Peter i. 19), and says, (1st Peter ii. 24), of that sacrifice, “ Who His own self bare our sins in

His own body on the tree," and that "by His stripes we are healed."

This central doctrine of Christianity, the Messianic Priesthood, universal and eternal, offering perfect absolution to every soul of man accepting it as a free gift of Grace, with that truly responsive feeling that is designated "Faith," was directly opposed to the letter and spirit of every form of Religion then known upon the earth, except by that spiritually enlightened class of the Jewish nation that had discerned its import as it was adumbrated in the symbols of the Mosaic Law and made clearer and clearer by the interpretation of the inspired Prophets.

The face of the whole world at that time was covered with priesthoods and ritualisms that benumbed the painful sense of sin but imparted no healing to the wound, no inspiration of permanent peace, love and joy. Hence that great revolutionizing act of the Messianic Dispensation, the abolition of the time-honored Sacrifice and the priestly order that offered it, connected with the introduction of the individual soul into an immediate, direct relation to the One High-Priest of Israel, "after the Order of Melchisedek," standing alone in the exercise of absolving power, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," put forth a quickening energy that realized the thought of the ancient Prophet, "He shall shake all nations;" it gave a new turn to religious thought, and won vast masses to hail it as a redeeming Gospel or to band themselves against it as a radical, disorganizing innovation.

How wonderful, from the point of view we now occupy, is the historical retrospect of successive millions, from the Pentecostal Era onward through the centuries, attesting their experiences of this uplifting power! The sinful soul conscious of sinfulness, is bidden, without regard to time or space, to come at once to the Great Absolver, to confess, to accept Pardon, and then to serve the Pardoner from the impulses of grateful love. This is the reunion of the fallen with God and Heaven. Does it not fulfill the true

ends of a Religion ? Does it not fathom the depth of our woe, and lift us to the highest plane of thought and aspiration, uniting the heavens and the earth as one inherited domain, and making us, as Paul expresses it, "Heirs of all things?"

Yet the Rationalism and the Naturalism of our time, having denied the possibility of miracle, denies also the possibility of forgiveness. Its philosophy of religion exhibits but one idea ; namely, the invariableness of Law. If I transgress there is no remedy ; I must suffer all the consequences, each one of which is, of course, a link of an endless chain ; must bear up as cheerfully as possible and try to do better. It says, there is no absolving Power in the universe. Sorrow can do no good ; *that* is no cure for poison in the body or sin in the soul. Therefore, talk not of repentance, but "come right round" into conformity to the Law which is immutable, all the wiser for your transgression.

So the Buddhist speaks to-day as of old. There cannot be forgiveness ; "as the cart-wheel follows the track of the ox, so must punishment ever follow transgression," ceaseless, without remedy.

Thus Naturalism in the name of Science, or Nature-Religion in the name of the universal religious sentiment, or Rationalism in the name of Transcendental Reason or primal Intuition, rejecting Revelation, speaks to-day, in Europe and America ; thus mocks our misery, our weakness, our hopes, our fears, our aspirations, our prayers.

The most eminent leader of the Free Thought School in this country, in an address before a State Educational Convention in New England, introduced his subject by a naturalistic argument on the inutility of prayer, the chosen Chaplain of the Convention, who had just then offered prayer, sitting by his side. Others of the same, or kindred schools, compose and utter beautiful addresses to the Deity in prose and verse, that might to some, perhaps, have a seeming of prayer. But they ignore, as Pantheists, the idea of Sin ; or, as professed Theists admitting it, affirm the impossibility

of absolution as a sequence of the immutability of Law. Of course, they have no Gospel in harmony with law, no scope for its action, no place in their circle of thought for the idea of Grace ; for that implies the existence of a Sovereign Will, of which in the realm of universal, absolute Law, there can be no trace. And so, to-day, the "Free Thought" of Young America nourishes the high ambition, to put the old oriental, Buddhist Fatalism into a dogma of science, and inaugurate it, under the name of "Free Religion," as the Light of the Future, as the morning star of their New Era.

Such is the Progressive School of Rationalism in this nineteenth century, so often spoken of as leading the van of Liberal Thought out of its old house of bondage, away from all restraint of Bibliolatry, into the land of Promise, the Eden of Reason, the lost Paradise restored, abounding in spontaneous growth of flowers and fruitage ; where man, developing with primeval freedom all the forces of his pure nature, shall realize those visions that are but prophetic inspirations ; sinless evermore, because the very idea of sin shall have been erased from the free mind, and be utterly unknown except as the dire chimera of the Theological Period in an effete Past.

This heaven upon earth is to be made actual by a culture that ignores the idea of sin and treats it as an old scholastic fancy that the age has outgrown. "Tell a man that he is depraved and you make him so," says a distinguished writer. Tell him that he is good by nature, born good ; then you kindle his aspirations, and help him to be good. Let him know that his errors are incidental, necessary limitations which he is destined to outgrow. Science has analyzed nature, but has made no report about sin. Suppose you approach this liberal theologian, or scientific interpreter of nature, seriously, with an appeal to his human sympathy ; tell him your own heart-story, informing him frankly that you recognize sin in yourself as a fact of consciousness. You may disclose your personal experiences with the spirit and the feeling, if not in

the words, of one who said, “ I have failed to realize my own ideal standard of goodness ; have found myself weaker than I had imagined in the actual encounter with temptation ; my good resolutions have not armed me with adequate strength ; I see men around me, as good by nature as myself, abandoned to the impulses of bad passions, unrestrained by laws human or divine, becoming worse and worse ; such plain facts are warnings, and teach me that I am liable to become as bad as the worst, unless I obtain some redemptive power : What shall I do ? Shall I pray for help ?”

To such a heart-cry for deliverance from sin, modern naturalism, speaking in the name of free religion, gives no answer but that of ancient Paganism as expressed by the Greek philosopher : “ Fool, that thou art ! Why call upon the gods to make thee virtuous ? Make thyself virtuous.”

That was all ; and in our time, this Religion of Free-Thought, in its *progressive* career has reached that same old stand-point of Paganism, repeating the same effete thoughts, the same fruitless ideas, claiming, nevertheless, that they comprise all that is essential in Christianity.

At the dawn of the Christian Era the numbers of inquiring souls whose convictions of sin were derided as folly, and whose anguish was mocked by philosophers and priests alike, was constantly increasing. Wheresover the Greek culture carried the philosophy of Plato, or the Greek versions of the Hebrew Scripture, the human conscience was quickened throughout the Gentile world ; the sense of sin was intensified ; and so, in this “ fullness of time,” throughout the Roman Empire, hosts were being prepared to hail with an appreciative response the proclamation of a divine, absolving power, incarnated in the one ever-living Messiah, attested by self-witnessing facts, and offered as a free gift of grace to every human soul that would fain come into heart-union with Him, in the exercise of a sympathetic faith. To thousands upon thousands that was, indeed,

"Good news," "Glad tidings," a Gospel seeming to many "too good news to be true."

Many an earnest, inquiring spirit, long oppressed with the galling code of unmeaning priestly ceremonies, was somewhat bewildered in the effort to apprehend the reality of a gift so munificent at the cost of another's suffering, and studied out the significance of that word "Grace," as opposed to meritorious works, with a doubt or wonder that issued at last in songs of rapture and heroic self-devotion.

Many a cultivated mind long habituated to the higher realm of speculative Philosophy, with affections congealed by the chill of its arctic temperature, with no solution of life's mystery but the one idea of Eternal Fate, felt at once the transforming energy of the Divine character as a living presence, when it was seen so clearly revealed in the Person of Jesus, the supremacy of power and the perfection of Goodness, one in Him.

And then, too, Woman, sensitive Woman, her higher nature so long ignored, enslaved and dwarfed, degraded to the level of mere animalism in the scale of being, with what keen, instinctive sympathy did she recognize in Jesus the voice of God's loving Fatherhood speaking through His words and works to her, "calling her by name," vindicating her right to equality with man as an heir of immortality, and thus uplifting her to her place of original dignity, both for earth and heaven !

What wonder that the whole world of human thought was stirred to its depths by ideas so revolutionizing ?

What wonder that the millions recognized in revelations like these the true light of Heaven, the outshining of God, just as you recognize in the rays of the morning sun a superhuman gift, and not a mere *development* of the capacities of your nature ?

What wonder that the civilized world should signalize the period of their advent in its noting of time by the designation of the Christian or Mesianic Era ?

What wonder that we, to-day, despite the long, hard “conflict of ages” still in process, despite “the blindness in part that hath happened unto Israel,” as well as to the genius and science of the Gentile world, are fully assured of ultimate victory, seeing, as we do, that this original revelation of the “Truth as it is in Jesus,” is still progressive, having at this hour no rival on earth as the effective agitator of the nations, seeing, too, that no other religion extant, Buddhistic, Brahminic, Mahometan, Jewish, or Naturalistic, has any motive-power of aggression, or any idea worth the cost or pains of proselytism ; and, seeing, moreover, that all the facts of the past, and of the passing present, are revealed with fresh responses to the prophetic song of the last of the Apostles, sounded out in exultant tone, from the solitude of his exile, across the Ægean, across the Mediterranean, and across the Atlantic, even unto us, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ ; and He shall reign forever and ever.”

S O U L:

A POSITIVE ENTITY.

BY

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SOUL, A POSITIVE ENTITY.

IT has been said that the writing of poetry preceded the writing of prose, but it can scarcely be claimed that poetry was *uttered* before prose. It is not likely that Adam on awakening out of his first sleep addressed Eve in a rhymed couplet or sonnet, or that Eve actually answered, as Milton represents her, in blank verse. Or if we adopt the hypothesis that man was once an ape, it can scarcely be imagined that his first vocalized ejaculation was a song or even a metaphor. But when he came to write, the first expressions that seemed to him worthy to be embalmed in chirography and transmitted to posterity were in the form of poetry.

In like manner metaphysics as a science preceded physics; the study of soul antedated the study of matter. The world has now reached a prosaic age. What to eat and drink and wear, and how to satisfy animal passions, are the great absorbing questions. We inquire "Will it pay?" We mean: Will it make bread? Will it bring money? Will it stand as a substitute for toil? Will it relieve us from the accursed "sweat of the brow?" Poetry is thought to be a hallucination to which youths in school are subject, but which will disappear when their wisdom-teeth are cut. Patriotism, taste, the "beautiful, the true, and the good," are mystical, unpardonable visions, appropriate for Sundays, sick-rooms and occasional after dinner parlor conversations, and for little else. Psychology,

say these modern wiseacres, is a conglomeration of hypotheses; there is nothing substantial, nothing certain about it.

It was not always so. The first great thinkers were poets, psychologists, religionists. Every race or people that has had a normal development has illustrated this. It was so with the Egyptians, the Hebrews, the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Greeks, the Romans, the Kelts, the Goths, the Aztecs, the Peruvians. Some of these never passed out of the stage where their only literary men or leading minds were poets, psychologists, religionists. Comte, author of the Positive Philosophy, so-called, avers that every thoroughly developed human being passes through three mental stages: first, religious; second, theoretical or hypothetical; third, matter-of-fact, or as we should say, practical. Now any proposition that has plausibility enough to be accepted by multitudes on annunciation, without investigation, must be at least a half truth. This is the case with Comte's dogma. It is a fact that the first natural development of a normal child is religious, the second, inquisitive, and generally the third, skeptical, shrewd and matter of fact.

Nations, too, have the same tendency.

But the defects in Comte's theory are: first, the assumption that development ends so soon as the healthy mind reaches that condition which craves and seizes hold of facts, and second, the assumption that what is developed first is necessarily imperfect. His view is that mere theologians develop into theorizers like Lyell, Huxley and himself, to become finally mere collectors of facts who will have no desire to know what facts mean, and no disposition to believe that there is a spiritual or mental foundation to this fair fabric of nature! Men forsooth are to lose not only poetry and imagination but all spiritual discernment and faith, and become simply gradgrinds of facts.

Comte's view, so far from being broad and comprehensive, was narrow though acute. He made a discovery, and that blinded him to all the universe besides. The theological element was not de-

signed to be outgrown and cast aside, but to be perfected and enlarged. The philosophical or logical element was designed also to abide, and both to be chastened, corrected and enlarged, and controlled by the thorough study of facts. Man does not, like an insect, pass through three stages and then perish. The good of each preceding stage abides forever.

We repudiate a religion that cannot endure philosophy, and we repudiate both the religion and philosophy that does not assent to and delight in all facts. We discard scientific hypotheses that are not confirmed by facts; and we regard facts themselves that do not suggest hypotheses and sustain religion as necessarily imperfectly evolved and demanding further investigation before they can be of any practical value.

The child is spontaneously theologic. He soon learns to distinguish between his clothes and himself, his body and his soul. He appreciates early the inquiry of Jesus: "Is not the life more than meat, the body more than raiment?" But we allow that the soul may be studied too exclusively without due attention to matter. This has often been done. The result has been a strange mixture of profound wisdom and arrant folly.

There have been men of extraordinary mental ability and extensive research into the nature and laws of mind, morals and religion, who were ignorant of the planet they lived on, of the topography of their own home, of the nature of their own bodies, of the laws of physical life, and who entertained the crudest and most absurd notions about ordinary practical life. Religious men, who could analyze the mental faculties shrewdly, who could discourse about the passions fluently and eloquently, whose merely logical faculties were strongly developed, have believed that God demanded the flagellation of the body, kneeling on pebbles and the wearing of coarse cloth to irritate the skin. Some have believed that while God created the soul the devil created matter, and even down to this present century some respectable names could be given of men who

have declared their belief that all depravity and crime inhere in the body and not in the soul. But perhaps the most extravagant opinion of these idiotic psychologists and religionists has been that *there is no matter*. The whole universe is soul and nothing but soul.

I call this opinion "idiotic," not to ridicule it, but as a scientific statement of its origin; for physiology teaches us that idiocy usually results from arrested development in the brain of a human being; so if a mind is arrested in the first psychological and theological stage of its growth, it may exhibit the extravagant and idiotic belief that matter does not exist.

But there are instances in which men are proud of their diseases. The gout betrays a luxurious diet. A king in olden time said that the common people ought not to be allowed to have the itch—that should be confined to the royal family, there was such a luxury in the pleasure of scratching. So we have been told of late that no man can claim to be a philosopher who does not doubt the existence of matter.

It is easy to doubt it. These theorizers who nurse themselves into this abnormal frenzy have no occasion to boast of their superiority over ordinary men. They are simply, for the time, monideists. They shut their eyes to all the Universe, but one narrow segment, and magnify that into disproportionate importance.

It is impossible to demonstrate by logic that all this material Universe is not a dream. The soul cannot reveal to itself anything more than itself in its various moods and experiences. If it believes in matter it is because the soul commands itself to believe in matter, and that belief is confirmed, because when once accepted all facts, events, phenomena harmonize with and assume it. The farthest reach of the philosopher on this subject is simply to return to the faith of childhood. Metaphysicians may write ponderous volumes on the subject and discourse learnedly about nihilists and realists, substantialists, monists, and dualists, and cosmothetic

idealists; the final conclusion of all of them who do not lose their common sense is, that we believe in matter because we feel it, see it, hear it, taste it, and smell it.

They actually do receive the testimony of the five senses. These senses may sometimes deceive us severally and singly, and contradict themselves, and in rare instances two or three of them seem to combine to utter a falsehood ; yet, on the whole, we find them trustworthy, and we really have no other testimony to fall back upon but their declaration and the decisions of the soul of which they seem to be the servitors, and, therefore, we believe them. If we cannot believe them we cannot believe anything ; but we must believe ! We agree therefore with Byron, who wrote :

“When Berkely said there was no matter
’Twas no matter what he said.”

There never was an idealist who, in the sublimest climax of his demonstration, would not turn aside in the road to escape an approaching carriage, though it ought not to hurt the dream of a man much to be run over by the dream of a carriage, or the dream of a body to be perforated by the dream of a bullet.

But there is also a class of men, and just now that class makes strong claim to our attention, who look with no sympathy upon this super-metaphysical notion which resolves all existence into thought, and some of them with undisguised contempt. These are the men of physical science. Their attention is constantly given to matter, and great have been their conquests.

Heroically have they betaken themselves to ascertain by inspection all facts, to examine all phenomena, to subdue and control and direct all forces, to answer all inquiries, to employ all power. They are urged on by the irrepressible instinct to know, by the honor gladly bestowed upon all who enlarge the domain of knowledge, and by the immense practical advantages often accruing to discover-

ers and inventors in physical science. Through their efforts the earth has been carefully measured and weighed, its constituent elements, as far as possible, analyzed ; the remains of past ages in its structure scrutinized ; its forces separated and recombined ; every living thing that could be reached has been watched from the egg to death ; and persistent efforts have been made to create life without previous life. These explorations have been extended to other planets and other suns. It has been demonstrated that several of the kinds of matter in the earth are also in the sun and in some of the stars. Heat has been utilized as a mechanical force ; the sun has been made to paint our pictures, and may yet furnish to us a motive power, wholly under our control, many times greater than all the power now used for the movement of machinery in the whole world.

To undertake to show to these men that matter does not exist—that it is a mere dream, a creation of the fancy, would be regarded as indicative of a deficient or crazed brain. They deal primarily with matter. All their discoveries are but cumulations to the conviction that matter is governed by laws all-embracing, unchangeable, eternal ; and, consequently, some of them have passed over into the extreme precisely opposite to idealism. As there have been some weak metaphysicians who, in their incapacity to comprehend and allow two diverse substances in the Universe at once, have resolved all into spirit, so they have their antipodes in weak and extreme physicists, who resolve all into matter. They deny that the soul is an entity. They make it a mere quality. It is secondary, not primary ; it is phenomenal, not substantial. Brain secretes it. It could not exist without a brain, and therefore a brain must have existed before there was any mind. The brain grows without any mind behind it, except a universally diffused, unorganized, impersonal, irresponsible brain-creative, and at the same time stomach-creative and all-creative tendency or force, which exists everywhere, and that is all we know about it.

Here it bubbles up into a vegetable, there into an animal, and finally into a conglomeration of refined mud, with a good large brain and well contrived nervous system, and thence come emotion, thought, love, philosophy, mechanical power, invention, self-control, dreams of freedom, patriotism, religion—all the soulless, aimless ebullitions of force in the great seething caldron which we call the Universe! This theory recognizes no distinction in kind between the rock and the geologist who studies it; between the metal and the chemist who refines it; between the shell and the conchologist, the flower and the botanist, the sun or star and the astronomer, the dead carcass and the anatomist, the earth and the man who tills it for bread.

There is nothing in the world but matter. Matter can exist in solid, liquid, and gaseous forms; it can whistle in the wind, glitter in the sunshine, blossom in the flower, smite in the lightning; it can also develop into insect life, animal life; and finally, by an irrepressible energy—all meaner and weaker forms disappearing—crop out into all the varieties of beasts, including even man, with all his passions, knowledge, powers, hopes, religions, and ambitions. All the Universe is dirt—some organized and some unorganized—neither to be preferred to the other, or if so, preference itself is a phenomenon of no higher order than dissolving, or evaporating, or rolling down a hill!

But do any believe this? No! All who pretend to believe it are self-deceived. It matters not what their pretensions are. Sanity must repel insanity by positive assertion. If the insane, for the time being, are equally vehement, their notions, when they do not lead to immediate mischief, may be safely left to evaporate.

When Huxley says there is no mind
There is no mind in what he says.

It may be unconscious, but it is an obstinate shutting of the eyes to the spiritual hemisphere of the Universe. Materialism is no

new doctrine. It is one of the hypotheses that suggest themselves spontaneously to all original thinkers in a certain stage of their development, and may be found therefore in the literature of many different nations. Religious philosophers outgrow it. Modern advocates of materialism do not surpass the ancient in acuteness or force, but their theories have never commanded general conviction, and never will so long as human nature remains the same.

The most substantial of all existences is soul. The first thing known to exist to every one is I, MYSELF, I. From that proposition as a centre all else is perceived. Manipulation cannot create. Organization of matter could not educe emotion and thought unless emotion and thought previously existed in the matter. Matter and soul are perceived to be distinct by the same power that perceives them to exist. A piece of gold cannot be hammered so thin as to begin to shout or cry out in agony. Thread cannot be spun so fine as to think. There is no thought in the electric flash, no emotion in mere motion. A lower substance cannot be transformed into a higher substance.

Efforts are continually made to produce life out of matter known to be wholly dead or devoid of the result of previous life, and ever and anon the scientific world is startled by the announcement that "spontaneous generation has at last been reached." So claimants to have discovered a mode of "perpetual motion," without any renewal of force, are continually presenting themselves. All well educated men laugh at the pretenders to perpetual motion, and scarcely a single Professor of mechanics, or well educated Engineer, will give a moment's attention to any man who makes so absurd a claim. And yet the two pretensions are the same, except that the pretended inventor of life is the more preposterous in his claims. And yet the conception is not intrinsically absurd! It is unreasonable only because we find it impossible. It may yet be possible. Man yet may be able to CREATE. Being in the image of God why should we not be permitted in a limited degree to exercise God's

highest prerogative and actually create out of no existing material ? But if man ever does exercise that power he will be conscious of it, and it will be so done as to brighten not to obscure his comprehensions of the nature of both matter and soul. Man may yet perhaps foreknow ; he may yet create.

The Bible recognizes soul as an entity. It assumes this as it assumes also the existence of God. It does not attempt to prove either, nor does it condescend to assert either, but both are assumed. They are indeed the invisible, ever present frame-work on which the whole structure is built. Some have maintained that the Old Testament does not teach immortality ! Poor, feeble-minded and blind literalists ! Would they have had the inspired writers of the Old Testament imitate children who when drawing pictures on their slates write under them : "This is a house" ; "This is a horse"? Must God be under the necessity of saying again and again, "This being is immortal"? Did not God say, "Let us create man in our own image"? But can a mortal mass of matter, however curiously wrought, be in the image of the Eternal Spirit? Did Jehovah manifest Himself in the early ages to brutes ? Did He select a mere animal, Abraham, to be the father of a chosen herd of animals ? Were the sublime utterances of the prophets and the psalmist the brayings of beasts ? "Moses was skilled in all the wisdom of Egypt," but the Egyptians and all other ancient nations believed in immortality—were God's people alone ignorant of this greatest truth ?

If this great truth was "brought to light in the Gospel," it was only as life, and duty, and prayer, and religious experience are brought to light, by the superior illumination shed upon them in the teachings and example of Christ and His Apostles, and in the more definite religious experience vouchsafed in these latter times. Body and soul are both recognized in the Bible ; the existence of neither is asserted. It would be no more absurd to state that the Bible teaches atheism than to assert that it teaches materialism.

That the positive existence of every human soul as an individual independent entity, capable of entering into a responsible compact or covenant with its Maker, God, and having its certain inalienable rights and duties, does introduce to our view many wonderful problems that we strive in vain so fully to solve that they will not perpetually re-present themselves with all their old mysteriousness and stimulants to the curiosity, no thoughtful person will deny. We cannot fathom the universe in this direction. We must stand under, we cannot understand ourselves. Coleridge quotes with approval the proverb :

“ Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how mean is man ! ”

And long before Plato said :

“ But is not the expression ‘superior to one’s self’ ridiculous ? For he who is superior to himself must somehow be inferior to himself ; and the inferior be the superior—for the same person is spoken of in all these cases. To me, however, the expression seems to denote, that in the same man, *as regards his soul*, there is one part better, and another worse ; and that when the better part of his nature governs the inferior, this is what is termed being superior to himself, and expresses a commendation.”*

We cannot deny the revelations, or assertions, of our own souls. To attempt it is to attempt a *felo de se*—but there is one crime which even the soul cannot commit, and that is, suicide.

Thought is constantly striving to embrace and harmonize the whole universe in one. It is a kosmos not a chaos. Nothing is independent, nothing alone, nothing totally unlike any other thing. The most dissimilar phenomena have some *nexus*, or bond of connection. A star and an instinct, a crime and a color, a wave and an epitaph, a shell and a city, somewhere unite. The two great schools of metaphysicians divide in their opinion upon the origin of

*Plato’s Republic, Book iv. Chap. 9.

this demand. Sensationalists can only account for this conviction of the unity of the universe on the hypothesis that we actually find all things one. Idealists can assert that the human reason demands that all shall be one. There is one God; one universe, and every part bears some relation to all other parts. This demand for unity predisposes to the belief that matter and soul are one.

Now we grant that a belief in the unity of the universe is a native tendency of the human reason. It is impossible to believe in two infinite Gods. It is nearly if not quite impossible to believe in an Infinite made up of finites, whether conflicting or in harmony.

The doctrine of the Bible is the doctrine of the reason, at least after the reason apprehends it, namely: There is one God, the Creator and Upholder of all things. But this doctrine does not imply a dead, monotonous average of all existences, an invariable uniformity like that which should exist in a mountain of mortar, or an ocean of mud. Diversity does exist. Chemistry presents nearly a hundred elements or different kinds of matter. Indeed, the same kinds by isomerism present diverse states or characteristics. The vegetable kingdom and the animal kingdom differ. The passions, instincts, and understanding of the lower animals differ from the passions, instincts, and reason of man. All these diversities may blend together, or may be presented in an oratorio so harmonious as to give us the idea of unity; but it is not the unity of a homogeneous mass, but the unity of a complex system presided over by God. So matter and spirit, though diverse substances, may, in a still broader generalization be regarded as one. May not both unite in God? In man?

The theory of the Bible is, that matter is designed to be used by spirit. They are, therefore, not hostile, but friendly; they are adjusted to each other. The abstract nature of the adjustment cannot be understood any more than the abstract nature of any quality or substance. We know not *what* any simple thing is. It is possible to know only that it is, not what it is. We cannot de-

fine matter, or force, or heat, or gravitation, or vitality, or spirit. We can only see their existence. If one of these passes over into the other, the one disappearing and the other reappearing at the same time, and *vice versa*, then we must infer that the two, thus interchangeable, are substantially one. It is believed that this can be shown of heat, light, motion, cohesion, electricity, and nerve-power. If so, the disposition to believe in unity is gratified by a discovery of this fact : the mere hypothesis is attractive. But mind stands behind it all, inconvertible into the instruments which it uses. The unit of heat, as commensurable with motion, has been obtained—but as yet no commensuration of mind with any matter or form of force has been attained. This, like “perpetual motion,” is the oft-recurring dream, but only a dream. It may be that these most subtle and most powerful agents in the Universe are the means of communication between spirit and matter, while they are substantially distinct from both, or it may be that through them matter and mind become or are substantially one.

The soul seems to stand supreme above all these agents. It cannot be possible that the highest reach of its power is suicide. The supremest reason cannot be its own annihilation.

On the other hand, the greater the advancement of science the more clear and vivid and sublime do the descriptions of manhood furnished us in the Bible appear. A soul that can know so much may reasonably be presumed to be immortal. Were all human beings savages or idiots, or fanatics, or mere slaves of toil or fashion, what confirmation should we have of the doctrines that man is the image of God, that God Himself became incarnated in humanity to lift up the race, and that the souls now on earth are to live even after death shall have dissolved the bodies which they now employ ? But when we see man gathering and recording and accumulating and classifying his observations, and reaching out by them into spiritual laws, transmitting his wealth from generation to genera-

tion, becoming so well acquainted with the theory of the universe that it would seem that if he could only exert his power upon its central spring, he could manage it himself—then the doctrines of the Bible became reasonable and sublime.

There is no conflict between the Bible and science. All truth is one. Both may be misunderstood. The votaries of each may pervert and caricature the other, but this betrays narrowness, not comprehensiveness and candor. Candor compels me to assert that theologians betray this narrowness fully as often as the advocates of science. The Bible is the great leading doctrines which it presents, not the drapery which they wear, nor the illustrations and machinery which they were compelled to adopt. So science is not the crude hypotheses of its advocates, but actual, solid, well ascertained facts and their laws. These two, science and religion, mutually sustain each other. I believe either would perish without the other. The wisest, broadest, and most liberal men on earth are those who appreciate and receive both.

As physical hypothesis after hypothesis presents itself to the imagination and arrays itself in facts and becomes a conviction, to show us how nature or God works, none of them explain the mystery of mind. Dr. Tyndall, one of the most eloquent of the modern school of men who claim to be physicists, but who really treat more of metaphysics than of physics, says :

“ Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain ; were we capable of following all their motives, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be, and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, ‘ How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness ? ’ The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain intellectually impassable.”

Alfred Russell Wallace, the modern co-discoverer and able defender of Darwin’s dogma of natural selection—the process by

which in nature's multitudes of kinds of living creatures struggling for existence, the strong and the fit conquer and destroy the weak and unsuitable—a theory, the beauty and truth of which careful observation will not allow us to deny—but, at the same time, which does not profess to reveal the origin of forces or existence, and least of all to shut out Mind, the great organizer and executor of law, has at length, as the supreme result of his protracted investigations, arrived at the conclusion similar to that believed by the great Christian chemist FARADAY, that "all force is will-force, and thus, that the whole universe is not merely dependent on, but actually is, the WILL of higher intelligences, or of one Supreme Intelligence. It has often been said, he remarks, "that the true poet is a seer; and in the noble verse of an American poetess, we find expressed what may prove to be the highest fact of science; the noblest truth of philosophy:

God of the Granite and the Rose!
Soul of the Sparrow and the Bee!
The mighty tide of Being flows
Through countless channels, Lord, from Thee.
It leaps to life in grass and flowers,
Through every grade of being runs,
While from Creation's radiant towers
Its glory flames in Stars and Suns."

Noble conclusion of science. Science, philosophy, religion, one. The great problems What, How, Wherefore, pertain to the same subject. The broadest minds, using their weaker brethren, the mere specialists, as servants, finally come together on the top of the mountain, and look down upon all its riches alike, and up, by faith, into the still boundless and infinite Heaven!

Of all absurdities the grossest is negativism; of all insanities it is the most to be deprecated. The great pillars of the universe are spiritual. To study all the countless plants from the microscopic mildew to the giant trees of California; to ascertain their classes, orders, genera, species, and variations; to inspect their pistils, sta-

mens, and roots ; to pry into their laws and habits ; to interrogate their tombs, petrifications, and traceries in the rocky volume of earth's primeval history ; in like manner to explore the animal world, behemoth, megatherium, intestinal parasites and *their* invisible parasites, radiates, mollusks, articulates, vertebrates, fossil, living, changeable, unchanged ; to classify kinds of matter and material structures, planets, systems, groups of systems, universes ; this, indeed, is noble, manly : but, while doing it, how unmanly to overlook or deny that intrinsic superior being, the soul itself, which explores, analyzes, comprehends, and masters nature ! How unwise not to claim fellowship with the Great Spirit that builds and upholds the Universe !

"The soul of man is larger than the sky,
Deeper than ocean, or the abysmal dark
Of the unfathomed centre. Like that ark,
Which in its sacred hold uplifted high,
O'er the drowned hills, the human family
And stock reserved of every living kind ;
So in the compass of the single mind,
The seeds and pregnant forms in essence lie,
That make all worlds."

—H. Coleridge.

Then let the soul assert itself. A perfect manhood returns to the instincts of childhood, and seizes upon them enlarged and beautified by the maturer reason. The circle of development completed restores us to religion now perfected, controlled by law, standing on facts, and instinct with fire from heaven. A perfect world will be a world of souls. Spiritual interests will be supreme. Matter will be the slave. Having no soul it is no oppression to enslave it. The Sabbath will be a perpetual delight. God will be consciously supreme. Society, Law, Industry, Science, and Nature will unite to bless man and honor God. The order which constitutes Right will be universal, and matter will be prized only because obedient to Soul.

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